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KHIDR: STRANGE ENCOUNTERS AND TRANSFORMATION

A dissertation submitted

by

MARY BARBARA ANNAN

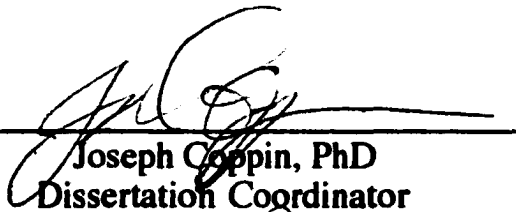
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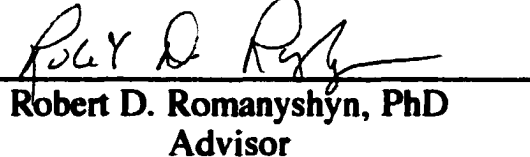
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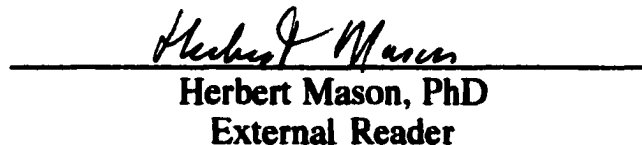
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ABSTRACT

Khidr: Strange Encounters and Transformation

by

Mary Barbara Annan

The figure of Khidr is well known and revered in the Islamic world. This wise stranger, who appears as a guide in the wilderness, is active in the psyche but remains largely unidentified and unrecognized in Western culture. Khidr appears most definitively in a religious text, the Holy Qur'an, dated 622 CE, but the elements of the mythologem may be traced back to the Gilgamesh Epic. The mysterious message of this semi-divine figure has persisted in the collective because it has the qualities of what Jung termed a "living archetype."

Using a hermeneutic method to discern the meaning hidden within the story of the enigmatic encounter between Khidr and Moses, it is possible to reveal the archetypal theme of the hero's journey, which provides a metaphor for the process of individuation. Encounters are experienced with a sense of altered consciousness and a delay in comprehension of the event. The factors of obfuscation and confusion mark the proximity of a constellated archetype, numinous content from the unconscious that heralds a reorganization of the self. The myth is a paradigm of relationships and psychological transformation, as is the alchemical metaphor. Khidr teaches acceptance of a higher, guiding principle that depth psychology refers to as the Self. New ways of knowing arise from the encounter of Khidr when ego overvalues the intellectual function.

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Note: The stylistic recommendations of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fourth Edition, (1994) have been applied throughout this dissertation.

Prologue

MOSES' JOURNEY WITH KHIDR

Sura 18, al-Khaf, "The Cave"

verses 60-82 of the Glorious Qur'an

- 60 Remember when Moses said unto his servant Joshua the son of Nun, "I will not cease to go forward until I come to the place where the two seas meet; or I will travel for a long space of time, eighty years and even more."
- 61 But when they were arrived at the meeting of the two seas, they forgot their fish, which they had taken with them; and the fish took its way freely in the sea.
- 62 And when they had passed beyond that place, Moses said unto his servant, "Bring us our dinner; for now we are fatigued with this our journey."
- 63 His servant answered, "Dost thou know what has befallen me? When we took up our lodging at the rock, verily I forgot the fish: and none made me to forget it, except Satan, that I should not remind thee of it. And the fish took its way into the sea in a wonderful manner."
- 64 Moses said, "This is what we sought after." And they both went back, returning by the way they came.
- 65 And coming to the rock, they found one of our servants, unto whom we had granted mercy from us, and whom we had taught wisdom from before us.
- 66 And Moses said unto him, "Shall I follow thee that thou mayest teach me part of that which thou hast been taught, for a direction unto me?"
- 67 He answered, "Verily, thou canst not bear with me:
- 68 for how canst thou patiently suffer those things, the knowledge whereof thou dost not comprehend?"
- 69 Moses replied, "Thou shalt find me patient, if God please; neither will I be disobedient unto thee in any thing."
- 70 He said, "If thou follow me, therefore, ask not me concerning any thing, until I shall declare the meaning thereof unto thee."
- 71 So they both went on by the seashore, until they went up into a ship; and he made a hole therein. And Moses said unto him, "Hast thou made a hole therein, that thou mightest drown those who are on board? Now hast thou done a strange thing.
- 72 He answered, "Did I not tell thee that thou couldst not bear with me?"
- 73 Moses said, "Rebuke me not, because I did forget; and impose not on me a difficulty in what I am commanded."
- 74 Wherefore they left the ship and proceeded, until they met with a youth; and he slew him. Moses said, "Hast thou slain an innocent person without his having killed another? Now hast thou committed an unjust action."

- 75 He answered, "Did I not tell thee that thou couldst not bear with me?"
- 76 Moses said, "If I ask thee concerning any thing hereafter, suffer me not to accompany thee: now hast thou received an excuse from me."
- 77 They went forwards, therefore, until they came to the inhabitants of a certain city; and they asked food of the inhabitants thereof: but they refused to receive them. And they found therein a wall, which was ready to fall down; and he set it upright. Whereupon Moses said unto him, "If thou wouldest, thou mightest doubtless have received a reward for it."
- 78 He answered, "This shall be a separation between thee and me; but I will first declare unto thee the signification of that which thou couldst not bear with patience.
- 79 The vessel belonged to certain poor men, who did their business in the sea: and I was minded to render it unserviceable, because there was a king behind them, who took very sound ship by force.
- 80 As to the youth, his parents were true believers; and we feared, lest he, being an unbeliever, should oblige them to suffer his perverseness and ingratitude;
- 81 wherefore we desired that their Lord might give them a more righteous child in exchange for him, and one more affectionate towards them.
- 82 And the wall belonged to two orphan youths in the city, and under it was a treasure hidden which belonged to them; and their father was a righteous man: and thy Lord was pleased that they should attain their full age, and take forth their treasure, through the mercy of thy Lord, and I did not what thou hast seen, of my own will, but by God's direction. This is the interpretation of that which thou couldest not bear in patience."

(Sale, 1877, [Trans.] pp. 244-246)

Chapter 1 Introduction

Introduction to the Topic

This dissertation explores the landscape of a myth of encounter and psychological transformation. The encounter is a meeting, real or imaginal, with an archetypal figure known as al- Khidr. “Al- Khidr” (Arabic for “the green one”. “Kh” is a hard H) is a recurrent figure in Middle Eastern myth and religious literature. Any hermeneutic or interpretation of a mythologem provides entry into the sphere of the Greek god of communication, Hermes. In the Moslem world, Khidr plays the role of the boundary god, the communicator between the ordinary world and the sacred realm. Khidr is also an interpreter who reveals meaning and divine purpose, in the most unlikely events, to the persistent seeker of truth. Just as Hermes is associated with theft (Keryeni, 1944/1992, p. 33), Khidr’s hallmark is unexpected encounter, shock, and surprising new realizations.

The time and place of the encounter is liminal (Turner, 1982) when the threshold of consciousness is lowered. Travel is also the province of Hermes/Mercury and Khidr, for on a journey one’s perception of reality may be easily become skewed, due to fatigue and disorientation. People who have experienced jet lag compounded by culture shock from an overseas flight to another country know this feeling of strangely altered perception.

Experienced as a real-world phenomenon, an unexpected transformative encounter with Khidr may seem as ordinary as a brushing up against a stranger. The event inexplicably jars the vulnerable soul, leaving it in wonderment, confusion, and no longer able or willing to continue in its accustomed previous way. Mary Oliver captures this experience in her poem, “Flying,” excerpted here:

Sometimes,
 on a plane,
 you see a stranger.
 ... You stand there
 shaken
 by the strangeness by the splash of his touch.
 When he's gone
 you stare like an animal into
 the blinding clouds
 With the snapped chain of your life. (1983, p. 34)

Understanding and recognizing profound psychological transformation is of great importance to a caregiver to the soul. For this reason, I would like to invite this little known and surprising “obscure archetype” of “psychic transformation and rebirth” (Jung, 1950/1980a, p.147) to the table of this depth psychological conversation. Whether a transformative moment occurs within the therapy session or in a life experience, a dream, or a vision, the experience may be deepened by analysis, bringing the unconscious contents into conscious integration. Such a change in perception is an event, and Hillman (1975) specifies that events become experiences and connected to the soul by the act of psychologizing or “seeing through” them.

There must be a vision of what is happening, deep ideas to create experience. Otherwise we have had the events without experiencing them, and the experience of what happened comes only later when we gain an idea of it--when it can be envisioned by an archetypal idea. (p. 122)

“Khidr” is an unfamiliar name to most English-speaking readers. Hearing his does not immediately stir up the associations that better-known names from mythology might evoke. In his company we are unfettered with assumptions and preconceived images. For this reason, Khidr is an excellent guide to deeper levels of psychological knowing. His image typically is encountered at crossroads, times of

disorientation and lowered defenses. This discomfort may be advantageous for our inquiry. We do not wish to reduce his image into concepts, a practice Hillman cautions against. "When we say that snakes and sticks are phallic symbols, we have slaughtered the images. Rather than force images into fixed and confined concepts, Hillman wants us to be forced by the images" (Moore, quoted in Hillman, 1989, p. 16).

Khidr is not an image to watch coagulate passively into a frozen abstraction, but he shimmers alluringly, tweaks and shocks us, and arouses our perception of reality and self. Letting go of old knowing and assumptions gives imagination absolute priority over ego understanding and applications. This is the psychological move of surrender of the rational faculties to intuitive knowing that Moses must make in order to learn from Khidr.

Khidr is frequently mentioned as an important mythological figure in the collected works of C. G. Jung. From 1933 on, those who attended the Eranos conferences convened by Jung at Ascanos, were introduced to the archetypal aspects of Khidr. The presentations given in that temenos on Lake Maggiore by Corbin, Jung, and Massignon brought Khidr not only to the Eranos table, but also to the consciousness of the European psyche.

The Khidr mythologem contains quest and desire, meeting and relationship, unknowing and chaos, meaning and purpose. Khidr appears in the literature of archetypal psychology in his parallel aspects of Hermes, Mercury (the alchemical Mercurius), and Elijah the Prophet. Khidr has been identified with St. George in Eastern Christian legends. A parallel is seen in the Hindu myth of The King and The Corpse (Zimmer, 1973). Aspects of Khidr wink at us from tales of the Trickster archetype. Dante's Divine Comedy (trans. 1954) takes the reader into the underworld

where Virgil is the guide and companion. Apuleius describes the daimonion of Socrates, a genius or spirit guide and resource who can intervene “now through a dream and now through a sign (synchronistic events)” (quoted in Von Franz, 1980, p. 148).

The primary source on which I am drawing to inform this study is the Holy Qur'an, the book of the Moslems transmitted by Allah through his prophet Mohammed. The eighteenth chapter (sura) entitled “The Cave”(al-Khaf), verses 60-82, contains the story of Khidr and Moses. These verses appear as the prologue to this dissertation. This story, the source of popular superstition and folklore, has been the topic of considerable speculation and commentary by both orthodox Moslem theologians and by the Sufis, the mystics of Islam. The Qur'anic story may be traced back to three main sources: the Gilgamesh Epic, the legend of Alexander the Great, and the Jewish Talmudic tale of Elijah the Prophet and Rabbi Joseph ben Levi (Gibb & Kramers, 1961, pp. 232-235).

For this writer, the conversation with Khidr opened over 25 years ago when hearing Herbert Mason tells of his strange encounter in Turkey. On a visit to Ephesus, the site of the “Cave of the Seven Sleepers” after which Sura 18, The Cave, is named, Mason experienced a change in consciousness, a new way of perceiving. A bearded man in brown robes approached him. This stranger inexplicably offered him an orange while speaking intently in Turkish. Mason at first declined the fruit, but a companion insisted until Mason accepted the proffered gift. A translator interpreted the robed figure's words. It seemed strange, hearing of a dream the stranger had of taking the teachings of God (Allah) to the West, but Mason responded on a deep level. “My entire consciousness was altered.” Later, Annemarie Schimmel, the Harvard Orientalist and author of numerous books on Islamic Mysticism, told Mason

that he had, at that encounter in Ephesus, received the kirqua, the mantle of the Sufi mystics, from Khidr. Receiving the kirqua may be understood as a numerous transferal of responsibility, a calling.

Hearing the story of Khidr in the Qur'an and Mason's experiences validated my own encounters with a similar figure. My own meetings with a stranger of an "other" nature took on new meaning when seen in the context of the myth. I believe that it is this struggle with the unbearable, with pain and personal loss and meaning, that has drawn me to ponder the Khidr myth and its enduring appeal for seekers such as Ibn 'Arabi, Jung, Mason, and Massignon.

This myth is unquestionably enigmatic and frustrating. It provokes the reader like the riddle of the Sphinx. It tweaks the rational mind and evokes a sense of otherness and mystery. The first time I heard it told, in a class by Mason, it took me unexpectedly. I was caught by the image of the fish come to life, followed by the appearance of this strange, fascinating man. I felt a sense of familiarity, as if this remarkable, unearthly presence had already appeared to me in some long ago, dimly recalled moment. It felt as if I had found a letter from someone I had deeply loved and somehow lost.

The feeling of the quest undertaken in desperation, in the face of loss and death, is captured in these lines from Mason's introduction to his translation of Gilgamesh:

We lost the one who we didn't realize enabled us to live in other people's worlds; now we have only our own private world and the almost Herculean task of constructing a human reentry. What we finally do out of desperation to recover the sense of "outside" is to go on an impossible pilgrimage, which from a rational point of view is futile; to find the one wise man whomever or wherever he may be (and we all have it engrained in our metaphysical consciousness, no matter in what age we live, that such a wise man exists or

should exist as witness to Wisdom; and to find from him the secret of eternal life or the secret of adjusting to this life as best we can. (Mason, 1970, p.111)

Khidr is this wise man encountered on the quest.

When I attempt to discuss this dissertation's topic or try to create understanding of this archetype and the psychological occasion for its constellation, I notice that a certain confusion and discomfort arises in my listeners and in myself. The dialogue becomes frustrating, and I feel as though I am speaking from an abyss. I am reminded of Jung's (1961) own sense of alienation and the anxious defensiveness of others when he tried to speak of his thoughts on psychic phenomena when he was writing his dissertation. His question was, "What did this anxiety signify?" I am led to ponder this as well. It may arise from the fact that the unconscious level is being approached, causing the psyche to fear an abbaissement du niveau mental (Pierre Janet's description of "loss of soul" [Jung, 1939/1944, p. 19]). My unsettled feeling may be caused by the transference relationship with the archetype, which, being a symbol, is "polysemous" and "cannot be defined exactly or interpreted completely" (Stein, 1991, p. 4). By its nature, the symbol resists attempts such as this to define or describe it. The work of this dissertation, like the work of psychotherapy around transformation, reflects this ambiguity and anxiety.

The mysterious, compelling image of Khidr has materialized insistently in synchronistic events and dreams during the dissertation's engagement of this topic. This phenomenon suggests that this exploration is timely and appropriate. There are phenomena which are manifestations of the "border zone in which the conscious and unconscious overlap, as occurs when the threshold of consciousness is lowered and unconscious contents penetrate spontaneously into the area of consciousness" (Jacobi, 1959, p. 62). These phenomena, interpreted as miracles or as pure chance in which

inner perceptions show a meaningful simultaneity with outward experiences, led Jung to assume a principle of synchronicity.

Strange, synchronistic events often surround an encounter with Khidr. An altered sense of time and space may be experienced since the acausality and space-time relativity prevailing in the unconscious simultaneously enter and act upon the field of consciousness" (Jacobi, 1959, pp. 62-63). "The ultimate causes of these phenomena," according to Jacobi, "are no doubt the archetypes"(p. 63). Khidr's role in liminal phenomena and perceptual shift in our discussion will include consideration of synchronistic events and overflow of unconscious contents into the cognitive domain.

In archetypal practice we encounter important images, whether as dream, fantasy, synchronicity, or pathology. A particular image, Hillman (1989) notes, is a "necessary angel waiting for a response" and comes "with a moral claim" (p. 50). Khidr, the friend of God, is such an image. It is significant to this study to note that Jung's personal encounter with the archetypes of the unconscious were initially with a Wise Old Man whom Jung identified as Elijah the Prophet, later to become Philemon (Jung, 1961/1973).

Stories of Khidr typically find him in private encounters with one person. The archetype of The Pair of Friends is thus constellated, as in a relationship between therapist and patient. Pairs such as Moses and Khidr, the Crimson Archangel and the prisoner, Gilgamesh and Enkidu, and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight are seen journeying, being tested, and seeking the water of life. Von Franz (1997) also suggests another pair, Philemon and Bauchis, a devoted husband and wife, who appear in Goethe's Faust as well as in Jung's dreams and his imaginal world.

The theme of the two companions on a journey introduces the pair as the polar opposites, the alchemical couple. The quest is in fact the search for the aqua permanens, the alchemical goal of the symbolic water of life. This move places our study of Khidr into alchemical metaphor. The pair, when identified as male and female, represents the hieros-gamos, the sacred marriage interpreted by Jung as the psychological transference (Haule, 1990). In depth psychology, the function of Khidr recalls Jung's (1946/1989) thoughts in his "Psychology of the transference". In this boundary-breaking essay, he introduces the concept of the transformative transcendent function, the alchemical concept of the Third, the filius philosophorum, the lapis or stone, and the alchemical Mercurius.

Our next question is, therefore, "who goes there" in moments of psychological shifts. What archetypal figures are constellated and present to witness the ego's letting go of old ways of knowing? This quest-ioning takes the ego consciousness into the topos of the archetypal realm, the imaginal world, the "betwixt and between" of psychological liminality (Turner, 1982).

The liminal quality of the encounter with Khidr is found "where the two seas meet" (Sura 18:60-61). This altered state of consciousness receptive to a shift may be compared to Winnicott's "illusory space" or "Third area" (1971/1994). In clinical practice, the transference has been known to create an altered sense of reality as well as a psychological shift. Ambiguity and anxiety, characteristic of the Khidr encounter are often experienced in the analytic session. This experience, particularly around events which create change and transition, such as midlife, is what Stein (1991) calls being in "the muddle"(p. 3). Psychological work is border work, done with people on the boundaries between reality and unreality, health and sickness, body and soul.

Khidr in the Qur'an is an archetypal Other met on the boundary, who asks for patience in spite of the discomfort of ambiguity and anxiety.

Liminality suggests initiation. Initiation, as a rebirth and transformation ritual occurs in time-less, space-less, consciousness where strange things occur and a mentor guides the initiate. The liminal encounter recalls the metaphorical goal of the alchemists interpreted as the transcendent function by Jung. The transformation, the new knowing ensues from a coniunctio, a conjunction of the opposites, a crucial stage in integration and psychological wholeness. Breakdown and breakthrough, known alchemically as solve et coagula, the "dark wood" of Dante, depression and confusion, the alchemical nigredo, the night sea journey, the Nykeia (Jung, 1961/1973) and the disturbing tale of Khidr with Moses, as are movements which may be interpreted psychologically towards individuation.

An encounter with the Verdant One as a specific archetype holds potential for personal and collective transformation. The question raised here is not if, but how this archetype might be present in modern Western technological culture. Where would Khidr appear today? In modern medical science there is Moses' quest to find the water of life played out in the single-minded effort to find eternal youth and delay death. In travel and therapy, in cyberspace and in our dreams and unrecognized, we have uninterpreted encounters with the Self, the Other, the Stranger, all Khidr forms, more frequently than we realize. To "see through" or "psychologize" an event is a "search for, 'whatness' or quiddity"(Hillman, 1975, p. 138). It is this search for meaning, for depth of soul in the myth and event of transformative encounter that makes this a depth psychological work.

Methodology

This dissertation is a theoretical study of Khidr, an imaginal figure, a legendary being whose appearance in religious literature and folklore is associated with deep psychological transformation. Employing a hermeneutic method, the archetype will be approached from an archetypal-mythopoetic perspective. This approach allows the topic to speak and interact with the work in an imaginal way. The heuristic research method described by Moustakas (1990) for investigations of the symbolic growth process provides the rationale and guidelines for this study. The mythological material presented will provide a historical background, a working image of the archetype's characteristics, an overview of aspects of the archetype's appearances in several cultures and religions.

This study takes into consideration of transference with the topic, particularly a topic as numinous as an archetypal figure such as Khidr. This approach is consistent with the heuristic way of knowing suggested by Moustakas (1990) that is a response to whatever presents itself to the consciousness as "an invitation for further elucidation" (p. 10). The hermeneutic presented here intends to allow the topic, the encounter with Khidr, to call attention to its presence and meaning in legend, in psychotherapeutic relationships, and in the world.

To avoid confusion and any expectations that are later unmet, I wish to set forth certain limitations inherent to this study. I shall be focusing on the mythologem of Khidr, primarily as it appears in Sura 18, vv. 60-82 of the Qur'an, for the express purpose of allowing the archetype to reveal itself. An understanding of the psychological meaning of the encounter with Khidr is the primary objective of this dissertation. This focus implies that certain aspects of the Khidr mythologem will not be discussed here.

There are three areas pertaining to Khidr that are not addressed in this study. These are as follows: first, Khidr's divinity. The debate has continued over several centuries as to whether Khidr is a mere human being, a saint (wali), or a holy being, an angel worthy of worship and invocation in prayer. Dissent comes from the belief that only Allah is God and only Allah may be worshipped (Mayet, 1994).

Secondly, there is some confusion of Khidr with the mythological "Green Man," the god of fecund earth and vegetation seen as an architectural embellishment throughout Europe (Anderson, 1990). The overlap of the Khidr myth with the European archetypal Green Man is acknowledged, but the Qur'anic image with its connection to older myths of journey, the water of life, and perceptual breakdown and renewal is the specific concern of this study.

Third, the name "Khidr" does not appear in the Qur'an. The name of Khidr has been traditionally used for the "one of our servants, unto whom we had granted mercy from us, and whom we had taught wisdom from before us" (Sura 18: 65,). In my discussion of Khidr as the character with whom Moses travels, I am following oral legend, the hadith, and traditional commentaries that have been associated with the story in Sura 18: 60-82 for hundreds of years. The presence of Khidr-like figures in parallel myths of two friends journeying to find the water of eternal life attest to the Khidr presence in the collective unconscious.

Statement of the Problem

This study will present and explore the following questions:

1. What is the specific nature of the Khidr archetype? Who is the presence encountered when there is a shift in consciousness?

2. What is the nature of the psychological space and time where an encounter with Khidr may occur?

3. How can understanding of the Khidr encounter inform our understanding of the transference? Given the nature of the interactive approach used in this hermeneutic of inviting the unconscious to speak, it is appropriate to include what arises out the transference with the dissertation topic during the writing.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1, **Introduction to the Topic**, presents a detailed overview of the contents of the study. Included are the method of research, and the statement of the problem.

Chapter 2, **Literature Review and Discussion** provides an overview of the literature from which ideas for this dissertation are drawn. Religious and mythological literature is examined to familiarize the reader with Khidr and his parallels, and to assist in differentiating the Khidr archetype. Modern psychological theories including Kleinian and Jungian are considered in presenting the myth as transformative and archetypal. Experiences of liminal and altered consciousness as integral to encountering the Other and psychological shift are discussed.

Chapter 3, **Islamic Sources of the Khidr Myth**. This chapter provides an extended discussion of the myth's sources in religious text, poetry and folklore.

Chapter 4, **Khidr in Non-Islamic Myths**, provides an overview of the parallel myths of Elijah, Hermes, Mercurius, the Green Knight, and several others, which inform this study. This material will aid in differentiation of Khidr from similar mythological figures and from depth psychology's concept of the Self. References

from fiction and poetry will be included as a means of illustrating the permeation of Khidr material into the creative processes from the collective unconscious.

Chapter 5, The Myth of the Hero, as analyzed for screenplays by Vogler (1992), is a model for a psychological journey. The Khidr myth is considered as a psychological journey towards transformation and individuation. The three shocking actions of Khidr become the “trials of the hero,” and a springboard for the ensuing chapter on suffering and psychological meaning.

Chapter 6, Jung, Al-Khidr, and Alchemy, looks at Jung’s personal encounter with the unconscious, the Khidr myth, and the parallel archetypal figures of Elijah and Philemon. Alchemy, the Third, Mercurius, and the transcendent function are considered as aspects of Khidr.

Chapter 7, The Three Trials : Suffering and Meaning, takes the Khidr myth into the domain of psychological theory from four perspectives. First, suffering and meaning are considered against the intolerable affect experienced by Moses in the presence of Khidr. Second, the transformation of early childhood trauma is discussed using fairy tales as psychological metaphor as suggested by Donald Kalsched (1996). Third, Melanie Klein’s (Segal, 1974) conceptualization of development and integration of split-off parts of the self as the movement from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position are applied to the journey of Moses as the ego with Khidr as the ideal object. Fourth, initiation as a necessary stage in the individuation process is explored as a model for analysis and containment for work with addiction, based on Sam Naifeh’s model (1994).

Chapter 8, Liminality: The Landscape of Transformation explores the place of transformation that lies in between shifting boundaries of awareness in the psyche. It occurs as a concrete fact, for it leaves memories and real effects on the consciousness

and behavior of those who experience it. Examples of transformative encounters with mythic qualities and altered consciousness are examined as psychologically liminal space.

Chapter 9, Khidr in the Here and Now, offers a summary of the interpretation of the Khidr myth and the meaning of an encounter with this provocative archetype. This chapter reviews the foregoing insights and the relationship with the topic as heuristic research. Liminal encounter with the Other for change on the personal level is discussed in context of the thoughts of Emmanuel Levinas (De Boer, 1997). The parallel process of working out of the transference with the topic of Khidr is considered as personal and collective. My hope is to create a path for a deep and enthusiastic (as en-theos, filled with the divine) relationship to this figure known in the Islamic world as al-Khidr, the friend of God.

A reminder or gentle caveat is offered. That is, in folkloric belief and in the understanding of Jung's archetypal psychology, the act of reading and bringing to consciousness this symbolic form of archetypal material may constellate in the reader, just as with my colleagues, the experience being discussed, with all manner of attendant synchronicities. In this case, it behooves us to wish peace to the stranger we pass today; the one whose eyes seemed too bright and who stirs our affect unexpectedly, who lingers uncomfortably in our curiosity, who makes an unusual gesture which somehow catches us unaware and leaves us profoundly moved and changed. He might be Khidr.

Invocation

It is necessary to allow intuition to guide this study and to invoke the name of Khidr in order to learn more of the autonomous nature and meaning of the Khidr experience. In the Moslem world, it is believed that when Khidr's name is spoken, he is present. Thus, I begin this work with an acknowledgment of the presence of Khidr with the traditional greeting, Peace be with you, and ask Psyche to bear with any feelings of confusion, ambiguity and unknowing that may arise.

Salam 'alyakum

Chapter 2 Literature Review and Discussion

Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the literature available for an informative introduction to the Khidr mythologem and an imagination of its meaning as a psychological archetype. The research findings are drawn from published material in the areas of classical psychology, religion, and Middle Eastern literature. In addition, texts from mythological studies, folklore, drama, and poetry are used when appropriate to amplify the material presented.

A search of recent published material on Khidr listed 30 works, of which four are collections of poetry, three are books in English, and the rest are in Arabic or Turkish. A review of dissertation abstracts reveals only one study (Sawyer, 1997) in which Khidr's name is mentioned. A master's thesis on Khidr (Mayet, 1994) was generously made available to me for this research by Herbert Mason, University Professor of Religion and Literature at Boston University. In a synchronistic event, typical of the constellation of the archetype, Mason just happened to have received the thesis at the time when I telephoned to discuss a possible dissertation on Khidr.

The Khidr legend aroused considerable interest among Orientalists and Islamists around the turn of this century, during the period when Freud was developing his theories of psychoanalysis in Vienna. Intense German scholarship on the Khidr myth was exemplified by I. Friedlaender, K. Vollers, and I. Goldzier, whose interest focused primarily on the Arabic and Islamic aspects of Khidr in Sura 18 of the Qur'an. Scholars such as Hanauer (1935) and Krauss (1912) describe popular folklore of the Middle East. These literary efforts contributed to bringing Khidr into

Western consciousness. These works were the sources that Jung referred to for several publications mentioning the Khidr archetype. Jung's earliest reference to Khidr "Chidher," as "a purely Islamic" legend appeared in "The Origin of the Hero" (1911/1956, p. 193). In this first of his several publications mentioning Khidr, Jung's thoughts are led by contemplation of the name of Ahasuerus in Miss Miller's fantasies to an interesting amplification. In a move to create a bridge from Western thought to the Orient, Jung's associations to Ahasuerus led him to include the parallel figures of Ahasver, the "Wandering Jew," and "Count St. Germain, the mysterious Rosicrucian whose immortality was assured" (p. 193). In the same essay, Jung mentions the name of the "ever-youthful Chidher" celebrated in song by Rueckert (p. 193). Jung (1939/1944) analyzes the entire story from the Qur'an in an effort to reveal who this "unknown servant of God" is, with the statement that Vollers' 1909 work on Chidher is his authority on the Qur'an commentaries (p.19).

The fact that there are 51 separate places that Khidr's name is mentioned in The Collected Works of C. G. Jung (1979) gives a strong indication of the importance Jung places on this archetype for depth psychology. Khidr appears several times, in places discussed at length, in seven out of 18 volumes of Jung's writings. In 1953 Jung (1953/1976) wrote a letter to Father Bruno, in which he chose--or perhaps was guided by Elijah, whom he identifies with Khidr--to illustrate the nature of archetypes and their functions. The transformative potential of encounter with Khidr, as portrayed in Sura 18 of the Qur'an, is the subject of Jung's essay "Concerning Rebirth," (1959/1980). Earlier versions of Jung's thought on this topic appeared in 1939/1944 at a presentation for analytic psychology in Zurich and in the Eranos Jahrbuch (1939). One may ponder what was constellated when Jung first encountered the Khidr archetype through Miss Miller's fantasies in 1916. At that time,

1914-1918, Jung was deep into his own fantasies and precisely the liminal zone or imaginal world that Corbin tells us is the realm of Khidr. In that period, during “the Great War,” Jung wrote on the identical nature of Khidr and Elias (Elijah) in “The Unconscious Origin of the Hero,”(1916/1956). Jung’s Four Archetypes (1959/1970) discusses the Mother, Rebirth, Spirit and Trickster archetypes in depth. Although Khidr is a form of Hermes and possesses characteristics of the Trickster, Jung identifies Khidr as a Rebirth archetype.

The Sources of the Myth

As Khidr is unfamiliar to most Westerners, I have devoted the first part of this dissertation to providing background on the myth. The material covered is divided into two bodies of literature: (1) the primary Khidr sources in Islam and (2) myths and figures in other cultures which may be identified as having characteristics of Khidr. The holy book of Islam, the Qur’an, is the primary source for the image engaged in this hermeneutic. The actual text of the Khidr story is found in the Qur’an, Sura 18, entitled “The Cave” (al-Khaf), verses 64-81. I have reproduced the section of the Sura containing the Khidr story in the Prologue (pp. ix-xi).

Israel Friedlaender (1913b, 1915), in his scholarly studies of the Khidr legend, informs us that the Qur’an does not, in fact, name the mysterious stranger whom Moses encounters. It is through reference to later commentaries of Islam and cross-reference to Judaic legends and to Greek and parallel myths in other cultures that the archetype’s identity becomes discernable. Friedlaender’s comprehensive study, Die Chadhirlegende und der Alexanderroman (1913a) traces the origin of the Khidr myth from the early Greek “Pseudo-Callisenthos” narrative, the Glaukos myth, and the legend of Alexander the Great, known also as the Alexander romance. In

addition to this seminal work on Khidr, I have referenced Friedlaender's entry on Khidr in the Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam (1961), and in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (1915), and his contribution to the Jewish Quarterly Review on Kazwini's parallel to the Khidr myth.

Scholarly interest in documentation of Khidr's appearances in linear time and concrete place represents what might be considered a fusion (or intrusion) of technological research into the domain of the imaginal. El-Khadr and the Prophet Elijah (Austinovic, 1972/1972) inspects and maps several sites in Israel, Lebanon, and Turkey where Khidr and Elijah are said to appear. Haddad (1969) contributes to an understanding of the cross-cultural appeal of Khidr in an exploration of the Christian parallel to the Khidr legend, entitled "Georgic Saints and Cults of the Levant." Knappert (1985), in Islamic Legends, assesses Khidr's appeal to popular worship, and Austinovic (1972/1972) in his well-documented guide to the geographical places where Khidr is worshipped, illustrates how the figures of St. George and the prophet Elijah are intertwined in folklore with Khidr.

Khidr in Sufism

S. H. Nasr brings our attention to the 10th-century world of Islam in a study of Avicenna, Ibn 'Arabi, and Suhawarhdi in Three Moslem Sages (1964). This work gives insight into the philosophical and theological thinking of that golden age when Islamic arts and sciences reached their zenith. Sufism began to express itself in poetry. Encounters with Khidr as described by Ibn 'Arabi and others were accepted as real events of significant psychological meaning (Quest for the Red Sulfur, Addas, 1993; Moslem Saints and Mystics, Attar, [Arberry trans.] 1966; Sufis of Andalusia, Ibn 'Arabi [Austin trans.] 1971; Imaginary Muslims, Baldick, 1993). An

encounter with Khidr means a profound change in one's life as Khidr passes on the kirqua, the mantle of Sufi spiritual discipleship.

Noteworthy in this field for her understanding of the meaning of an encounter with Khidr, is Annemarie Schimmel, professor of Indo-Moslem Culture at Harvard University. Her Mystical Dimensions of Islam (1975) describes the role Khidr plays as spiritual guide and bearer of divine wisdom. In her account of the life of Rumi, I Am Wind You Are Fire (1996), Schimmel states that the Khidr story in Sura 18 shapes Rumi's attitude to suffering. This book thus provides a direction for psychological interpretation the function of the archetype. Schimmel's thought points to an issue that is currently on the table in depth psychology, that is, the mind-body split, dualism and over-valuing the intellectual, rational side. This issue lives in the heart of the Khidr myth and its psychological interpretation. "The predilection for immediate knowledge was contrasted with legalistic scholarship as expressed in later times by many poets and mystics" (p. 18). "To break the ink-pots and to tear the books" -- the poet's words call for a return to the intuitive meaning of life was considered by some mystics the first step in Sufism (pp. 17-18).

An initial step on to the bridge from the Islamic mysticism to depth psychology is formed by the writings of Henri Corbin. The most salient work for a depth psychological interpretation of the Sufi concept of Khidr and the imaginal world is Corbin's Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi (1958/1969). Corbin's writings on the Mundis imaginalis (1972) and his psychological understanding of the spiritual realm guarded by Khidr and Elijah are based on the thought of the 12th-century visionary of Islam: Ibn 'Arabi. The question Corbin asks--"What does it mean to be a disciple of Khidr?"--is answered in his explanation of story of the Purple Archangel. This tale, from the teachings of Suhrawardi, the

originator of the Moslem school of Illumination, parallels that of the journey of Moses and Khidr. Corbin explains the spiritual meaning of the encounter with the stranger in the wilderness and the quest for the spring of eternal life where Khidr is found. To encounter Khidr and receive the mantle is "to become Khidr, to have attained an aptitude for a theophanic vision, for the encounter with the Divine Alter Ego" (1958/1969, pp. 59-60). It is this special mode of perception associated with the presence of Khidr that keeps us from interpreting his as merely a vegetation myth and that animates our later discussion of the myth as metaphor for the ego's encounter with Self.

An appreciation of the significant role of Khidr in Middle Eastern spirituality and psychology is allowed by referring to the works and life of Louis Massignon (1883-1962). A sensitive analysis of the symbolism and spiritual nuances in legends of Khidr by Massignon, ("Elie et son role transhistorique. Khadiriya, en Islam." 1955) opens the door for discussion of the contemporary implication and apocalyptic meaning of the Khidr mythologem. Massignon, a French orientalist, whose works are deeply interlaced with the Khidr presence, was unlike most of his predecessors and contemporaries in the scholarly field of Orientalism. He was considered the pioneer in awakening Western interest in Islamic studies. Mason is translator of Massignon's works from the French, including the magnum opus of four-volume The Passion of al-Hallaj (1982). Mason says that his friend and former mentor had "a rare brand of meticulous training and an ear for the music in his own and another culture's soul" (1989, p.xvi). Orientalism, as Massignon animated it, was both "an adventure and an imaginative investigation" (Mason, 1989, p. xvi). Khidr, in Massignon's words, was a spiritual guide from a higher world "Just as Beatrice, coming from a higher world, will succeed Virgil to guide Dante to Paradise" (p. 119).

Mason's thought and work on Massignon, al-Hallaj, the Gilgamesh Epic, and the Alexander Legend provide an important portal for information and effects of the Khidr archetype to enter the West and this study.

In the last several decades, interest in alternative religious and spiritual paths from outside of the Western Christianized world has produced a growing demand for information, sacred music, art, and books, focusing on Sufism and the spiritual life in Islam. Marvin Spiegelman (1991) attests to the considerable following of the Sufi Order in the West led by Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan. Forums on Sufism, coffee table editions of Sufi Jalaladin Rumi's poetry, Sufi Internet newsgroups, as well as modern scholarly studies on Islamic mysticism have appeared. Through these sources the story of Khidr is finding its way into Western consciousness.

Parallel Myths

There is an important parallel to the Khidr legend in European myth. A. K. Coomaraswamy discusses the archetypal themes of the Khidr myth in his essay on Sir Gawain and The Green Knight (1944). A contemporary with Mason and Schimmel in New England, Coomaraswamy wrote extensively on medieval and eastern topics while he was curator at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Coomaraswamy (1944, p. 108) and Jung (1945/1967, p. 310) cited each other's works in the area of alchemy. The circle of those who know of Khidr, for example included Massignon, Mason, Jung, Corbin, Coomaraswamy, Nasr, and Schimmel, seems to represent a bond of spirit. The creative hermeneutics of their writings and interests suggests a transpersonal connection between their works and their interests, providing psychic space for the constellation of the Khidr archetype. All of these individuals devoted

their lives to a personal pursuit of greater wisdom and immortality expressed in meaning. This quest is where Khidr is encountered.

Heinrich Zimmer's (1948/1973) discussion of the four romances of the Arthurian cycle in The King and the Corpse brings out important themes common to the Khidr legend including immortality and death, a quest, and trials. In the story of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, "the gift bestowed on the initiate, Gawain, is the green girdle of the color of death," Zimmer points out, "which confers immortality and is the talisman of rebirth" (p. 79). The encounter at the Green Chapel and the withstanding the test of the Green Knight places Gawain in a universal mystery. "In this chivalric adventure death plays the same role as in the ancient myths and epics of Gilgamesh, Herakles, Theseus and Orpheus" (p. 76). In his essay "Gawain and the Green Knight: The Myth of an Intuitive," Dossetor (1942) identifies myth as portraying the integration of the inferior function of the self "which burst upon" Gawain "personified as a knight" (p. 15). The theme of a relationship between two opposites or an archetypal pair of friends who meet on a life quest with certain strange conditions to be met, is also found in the Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh and Enkidu and in the Hindu tale of the King and the Corpse.

In Jung's (1939/1944) analysis, the two travelers, Khidr and Moses, are compensatory figures of logical law and reason (consciousness), and represent lower man (sarnikos), challenged by higher wisdom (unconsciousness) or higher man (pneumatikos) (p. 17). Von Franz writes:

Duality as a motif always points to the fact that although an unconscious content is actually single, as a content of the unconscious it possesses paradoxical qualities. When it begins to appear on the threshold of consciousness, it manifests itself in opposites. (1997, p. 61)

The archetypal theme of the pair of travelers searching for the water of life is found throughout mythology. Von Franz develops the interpretation of the theme of two travelling companions in her essay, "The Unknown Visitor in Dreams and Fairy Tales" (1997) with archetypes such as Philemenon and Bauchis and the Khidr-Elijah pair in folklore. Dante and Virgil, Faust and Mephistopheles, Gilgamesh and Enkidu, and Krishna and Arjuna also fall into the archetypal pattern of the pair. A direct connection exists between the Khidr and Moses story and another pair of travelers, in the legend of Alexander the Great and his cook, Andreas (Friedlaender, 1913a). The Alexander legend is based on an epic attributed to the 12th-century Persian poet Nizami, an Iskandernamah, a journey account of Alexander the Great and his companion-cook Andreas in their mutual Quest for the spring of eternal life. The journey is fulfilled for Andreas who drinks from the fountain of life and becomes al-Khidr, but Alexander seeks in vain; he fails to drink the water. This myth is the basis for a drama by that name written by Mason (1986) in which Khidr is identified by name and fame of immortality and ambiguity. The use of drama brings the personality of Khidr into this world, living and imaginal. Another aspect of Khidr is found in Mason's (1986) drama of a merchant and a parrot. This play, based on a poem by Rumi, follows the theme of the fraternal mystics of the Sufi orders, who, like their guide Khidr, are forever conscious of one another ("two bodies but one soul").

The Greek god Hermes parallels the character of Khidr as guardian of the threshold, appearing at crossroads, in times of disruption. Encountering Hermes, Mercurius, or Khidr in a time and place of transition can communicate a different reality. Karl Keryeni in Hermes: Guide of Souls (1944/1992) describes the complex role of the Greek god and provides an archetypal background for understanding the nature of a soul guide. Keryeni observes that what we "discover about Hermes in the

liad refers to alternatives of life, to the dissolution of fatal opposites, to clandestine violations of boundaries and laws” (p. 7). In modern depth psychological terms, many moments may be identified when boundaries weaken and the unconscious blurred the edges of reality. Khidr, like Hermes, “reflects a sensed presence of the unconscious whenever life throws us into the state of liminality” (Stein, 1983, p. 8). The psychopomp figure appears not only in ancient Greek legend, but in Jewish lore as well. Christians and Jews are familiar with the name of the prophet Elijah.

Khidr and Elijah

The prophet Elijah may be seen against the backdrop of the ancient Middle East as a biblical character. His presence, however, has traveled unceasingly, like the image of the Wandering Jew that Jung identifies as Khidr “the tireless wanderer,” identified by the old commentators as Elias (Elijah) (1911/1956, p. 195). “Heroes are nearly always wanderers” Jung comments (1916/1956, p. 199). Folklore of the Yiddish- speaking world has kept the elusive prophet alive in the consciousness of European Jewry. Barbara Myerhoff’s Number Our Days (1979), a study of an aging Jewish community in Long Beach, California, contains a contemporary tale of an Elijah encounter and the resulting life transformation.

The relationship between Elijah and Khidr is explored in depth against the backdrop of Islamic theology and folklore of the Middle East (by Friedlaender) and in Louis Massignon’s (1955) in-depth analysis reveals the Jewish and Christian scriptural antecedents referent to Khidr legend. The biblical account of Elijah in I Kings is reevaluated by H. Cooper (1985) as a metaphor of transformation within liminal time and space.

In Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends in Islamic Folk-Literature (1982), Haim Schwartzbaum identifies the early Jewish sources of the Qur'an's story of Khidr. Schwartzbaum cites Vollers and Friedlaender as concurring with the statement that Khidr and Elijah are the same person. The archetypal nature of the Khidr-Elijah connection, is indicated by the existence of parallel stories. Examples are tales of Elijah and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, of Elijah and Rabbi Anan, found in the Talmud, in haggadic stories and Ginzberg's definitive Legends of the Jews (1968).

Several anthologies of Jewish folklore including the archetypal Elijah stories have appeared since Ginzberg's collection appeared in 1968. Howard Schwartz has written several collections of legends containing Elijah material. Schwartz presents Jewish folk legends as they occur in major cycles involving biblical figures such as Enoch, Moses, and Elijah. Schwartz's (1983) introductory notes indicate the author's familiarity with Jungian archetypes and mystical thought as he describes an example of a story of the Elijah archetype encountered in sleep. Penniah Schramm in Tales of Elijah the Prophet (1991) attributes the connection between Elijah and Khidr to their common characteristics of immortality and their association with threshold events of psychological and political upheaval. Samuel M. Segal (1935) comments on the difference between the Elijah of the Bible and the Elijah of Rabbinic legend. Elijah comes in the form in which he is needed, as "young man, old man, Arab, harlot, teacher, prince or slave" (p. 6). The sage's character and function undergo quick changes, from "vengeful and hot-tempered" (p. 6) to benevolent and utterly human. He states that "the Elijah of legend is the repository of the conflicting needs and ideals of the folk" (p. 7).

Aharon Wiener's (1978) thorough study, The Prophet Elijah in the Development of Judaism: A Depth-Psychological Study, looks at the early scholars'

comparative search for themes from the Khidr story. These are “the junction of the seas, the miracle of the fish, the source of life, and the figure of the servant of God to themes from the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Greek legend of Glaucus, and the so-called Roman d’Alexandre” (p. 158). The Orientalists, such as the aforementioned Vollers, along with Goldzhier, Friedlaender, Lidzbarski, and Wensinck, are re-evaluated by Wiener from a contemporary viewpoint. These earlier examinations of the archetypal motifs, their transformations, and migrations and the change of the hero’s name and form are the prima materia for psychological interpretation of the Khidr myth. Wiener, a student of Erich Neumann, also provides an excellent but brief archetypal analysis of Elijah as a parallel identity of Khidr.

The Landscape of Encounter: Liminality

It is important to recognize that there is an altered consciousness, a psychological shift into a perception that differs from the ordinary when Khidr is encountered. This may involve a loss of orientation and a feeling of timelessness. Space and location no longer have the same meaning, if they even exist. I have chosen to explore the meeting of Khidr as an event of liminality, occurring beyond the threshold of consciousness.

Where is Khidr encountered? What is the landscape of transformation? What generates the *kairos*, the right conjunction of time space and events that of precipitates a shift in consciousness? A cartography of the terrain where an “archetype” though “in itself irrepresentable, but has effects which make visualizations of it possible” (Jung, 1954/1969, p. 214). An examination of the psychological space where a transformative event, a Khidr encounter occurs is an approach suggested by the concept of topoanalysis, “the systematic psychological

study of the sites of our intimate lives,” as described in Bachelard’s (1958/1994) The Poetics of Space.

The question asked by Winnicott in Playing and Reality (1994) about the nature of transitional phenomena and the distinct place and time of playing was, “If play is neither inside nor outside, where is it?” (p. 97). Winnicott introduced the concept of “transitional space,” the “area of illusion,” as a place where an important psychic function is fulfilled by the imaginal. The following selection of literature will focus on the psychological time and space and altered states of transformative encounter which will inform this study of the Khidr archetype.

Eigen (1991) credits Winnicott with giving practitioners a “a breath of fresh air” (Eigen, 1991, p. 68) for their thinking about psychotherapy. The intermediate area this study identifies as Khidr’s realm may be analogous to that which Winnicott pointed to as one that “felt free,” by noting that it was not Klein’s internal object world and not Freud’s reality object world (quoted in Eigen, 1991, p. 69).

A collection of several authors’ perspectives on Winnicott’s transitional objects and phenomena is found in Grolnick and Barkin’s Between Reality and Fantasy (1995). Insights into the area of illusory space and respect for Winnicott’s contribution to psychology are offered but do not offer much useful material to meet the focus of this paper on encounter and transformation.

Rieff’s (1963) Freud: General Psychological Theory provides background from the psychoanalytical perspective. A shift in consciousness thus would look like the parapraxes: a slip of the tongue, a dream, a joke, an object mislaid. It may also appear as a previously repressed memory content which allows the primary process and unconscious to intrude into cognitive reality. Freud’s description of the state of discomfort and anxiety in the transference reveals his sense of an altered perception of

time and place. The transference, as Freud learned, is a place of informative connection to the process of the patient's unconscious. Reiff explains: "The cases described as splitting of consciousness--might better be described as shifting of consciousness--that function--or whatever it be--oscillating between two different psychical complexes which become conscious and unconscious in alternation" (p. 52).

A shift in consciousness, understood as a transformation of personality in the psychological theory of Melanie Klein (Segal, 1974), is created by a movement from distorted reality in the paranoid-schizoid position to a sense of wholeness in the Depressive position. John Steiner (1992) describes the affect stirred in psychological fragmentation, saying, "a confusional state may then develop which often has particularly unbearable qualities." He discusses this state as a continuum between Klein's two basic groupings of anxieties and defenses in "the equilibrium between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive positions" (p. 51).

Liminal phenomena, knowing, and transformation are discussed in the context of psychological theory of Klein, Bion, and van Gennep's rites of passage by Rhode in Psychotic Metaphysics (1994). Rhode offers provocative suggestions about the perception of reality and the constellation of meaningful liminal phenomena. The theories of Freud, Klein, Winnicott, Bion, and Jung are integrated around clinical work and encounter with the realm of the unconscious in Eigen's book, The Psychotic Core (1993).

Mary Watkins, author of Invisible Guests: The Development of Imaginal Dialogues (1986), writes that "dialogues with the 'Angels' of imaginal reality, far from being symptomatic of pathology, are understood as teaching on to hear the events of the everyday symbolical and metaphorically" (p. 75). Watkins explains that

imaginal dialogues have a reality and a psychic value not only for children but also throughout the entire life of the individual. She states that using psychoanalytic concepts to study imaginal dialogues reduces the phenomenon to concern with pathology. Rosemary Gordon ("Losing and Finding: The Location of Archetypal Experience," 1985) suggests a bridge-making approach to understanding psychological space. Rather than assuming the view that the archetypal is elemental and archaic or that it is a supra-personal and prophetic internal guide, Gordon proposes a third way of understanding the quality and the function of the archetypal. She argues that

while psychological growth and maturity consists in the withdrawal of archetypal themes, images and motifs from actual objects and persons--including one's self--to which they have become attached as a result of the processes of projection, incorporation, and identification, yet they must not be totally superceded and eliminated. For they do have a very important function which they can only fulfil if, instead of distorting actual objects and persons, they can move into what Winnicott has called the 'area of experience' or the 'area of illusion'. From there they can then enrich the inner world, enliven it, activate imagination, restore a sense of the wondrous, the awesome, the miraculous, the mysterious, the poetic, and so enhance the sense of being truly and meaningfully alive. (pp. 118-119)

Jungian analyst August J. Cwik discusses the psychotherapeutic use of a liminal area in "Active Imagination as Imaginal Play-space" (in Schwartz-Salant & Stein, Eds., 1991). He looks at the transference, from a Jungian perspective, for aspects similar to those of active imagination. James A. Hall (in Schwartz-Salant & Stein, Eds., 1991) describes liminal identity as one that involves a shift of identity (p. 41) in an essay pertinent to the topic of transformation in liminal encounter in "The Watcher at the Gates of Dawn: the Transformation of Self in Liminality and by the Transcendent Function". A liminal identity is one that involves a shift of identity

based on sociological distinctions between marginality, liminality, and lowermost. His discussion of Turner's liminality and Jung's transcendent function suggests "that the transcendent function refers to the ability of the Archetypal Self to produce a unification of the opposites which cannot be done by the conscious ego alone" (p. 46). Another view of liminality is that of Bani Shorter in "Border People" (1982). Shorter compares therapists to liminal people in anthropological terms, people who work with border people who travel psychologically to transitional zones, boundaries between reality and unreality, health and sickness, body and soul. Our role is perceived by Shorter as accompanying those who are in a time of shifting consciousness and who may experience a transformation in a threshold encounter. Shorter's analogy of meeting the Other on the border recalls the mythopoetic encounter with Khidr in the place of the middle. Schwartz-Salant's sensitive work with borderline patients discussed in The Borderline Personality: Vision and Healing (1989) encourages study of mythological figures and stories of the border for a deeper understanding and tolerance of the healing process with these people.

A middle ground between the conscious and unconscious world is described by Turner (1909) in his classic essay *Between and between: The liminal period in rites of passage* (quoted in Mahdi, Foster & Little, eds. 1987, p. 3). Van Gennep (1908/1960) in The Rites of Passage addresses psychic change in initiates in rites of passage but is concerned with social relationship more than the experience that occurs between different forms of consciousness or knowing. Turner discusses the interface of sacred and secular, order and chaos, and introduces the psychological usage of the term "liminal." Turner (1982) states that he has tried to revert to Van Gennep's earlier usage of the term "passage," as more the processual form than exclusively in connection with "life-crisis" rituals (p. 24). Van Gennep distinguishes three phases in

a rite of passage: separation, transition, and incorporation. The first phase of separation clearly demarcates sacred time and space from profane or secular place and time. Turner says that it is more than just a matter of entering a temple. There must be in addition, a rite, which changes the quality of time also, or constructs a cultural realm, which is defined as “out of time,” that is, beyond or outside the time, which measures secular processes and routines). Eliade (1964/1989) describes a mythical time (in illo tempore) accessible in shamanic states of consciousness which has qualities of the liminal, betwixt and between zone (p. 94). Jungian Robert Moore (1991b) in “Ritual, Sacred Space and Healing,” explores the space of transformation using Turner, van Gennep, and Eliade’s earlier views of liminality as modern psychotherapeutic metaphor. Moore offers his perspective of re-accessing archetypal energies in as the work of the magus, and the comment that “psychotherapy in our culture is always at least liminoid” (1991b, p. 27).

The realm of liminality or sacred space where the Khidr archetype lurks is well known to the Sufi mystics of Islam. Henri Corbin (1972) describes a place, called the Mundis Imaginalis, the imaginal world, where one may have transformative encounters with angels and the “Khidr-Elijah” figure in a time-less, space-less, “non-where.” Corbin’s psychological interpretation of the teachings of the mystical Middle East, in particular, Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabi (1958/1969) is a bridge between the Khidr legend and the Eranos conferences where Jung and Massignon entered the circle. Depth psychology has opened a door for the imaginal world to be re-considered for its intrinsic value. An important paper for bringing the Khidr experience into the discussion of the field as participation mystique is Erich Neumann’s “The Psyche and the Transformation of the Reality Planes” (1956).

The liminal threshold of an abaissment du niveau mental is not for all to cross, Mogenson states in Greeting the Angels (1992). The soul has a need to make encounter with the dead, the ancestors, to further understanding of what loss, sacrifice, and mourning are for. The living, the bereaved, haunted by the realm of timelessness, can gain from encounter with the dead. The insights into psychological encounter of other, put forth in this innovative perspective, contributes to a “seeing through” of a Khidr experience.

Being in the “muddle” as betwixt and between is how Murray Stein (1991, p. 3) refers to an awkward, uncomfortable point experienced in the psychotherapeutic session. It is in this space, as in a life transition where confusion reigns that the Khidr presence intervenes in consciousness. In this brief slippage of reality, the possibility of a new perspective, even a re-alignment of one’s ego, opens. In the Khidr-Moses story of the Koran, Tuby (1984) identifies the alchemical polar opposites as a pivot for her discussion of the shadow and evil as unrecognized evil in oneself. The crux of the Khidr encounter and the focus of this dissertation, the unexpected shift “from ego to Self” (p. 8), the psychological alteration of consciousness occurs in the nigredo, “deep shadows” (p. 9) when it is necessary to “bear paradox” (p. 8).

The Time of Encounter: Kairos

The time when the Khidr archetype is constellated is as important to consider as the place. It occurs at the right time, the kairos. The image of the crossroads is strong. The concept of kairos time differs from kronos, or measured time. Synchronistic events characterize the presence of Khidr encounter and space. Bolen (1979) writes of kairos time in synchronicity, Jung’s concept of unrelated events that

seem connected in meaning and meetings between two people taking on a special quality signaled by a feeling of at-oneness and participation in a greater process.

The kairos can occur in a chance meeting between two persons, and in this meeting the whole of one's outlook may undergo profound changes (MacNab, quoted in Cox & Theilgaard, 1987, p. 221). The right time is often in the midst of psychological turmoil, when the ego becomes more permeable to the transpersonal level and numinous experiences can occur (Corbett, 1996). Von Franz, in Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology (1980), describes the kairos of the alchemical moment of transmutation. "When something crystallizes depends upon very irrational factors," she says, "the whole of alchemy depends upon the kairos. One must also consider and wait for the astrological constellation and pray to those planet gods. Kairos therefore means the time when things can turn out successfully" (p. 44).

Ventures into threshold landscape may occur spontaneously, reflecting the autonomous nature of the archetype. Encounters happen at times of disorientation and confusion, or intentionally as in Jung's (1961) analysis of his personal experience. Jung's decision to let himself imagine a "steep descent" into his unconscious took him to the "land of the dead" (p. 181) where he met and was taught by archetypal figures including Elijah, the alter ego of Khidr. A similar, classic liminal encounter occurs in Dante's Divine Comedy (trans. 1954) with a sudden breakthrough into the underworld. There, "in the middle of the journey of our life, in a dark forest," he admits, where, he "cannot tell how [he] entered it" (p. 7). Virgil appears as the guiding archetype (p. 99). The experience of a liminal state, of lowered defenses to the unconscious, brings ones awareness to the guiding figure.

Khidr in Alchemy: Mercurius

Jung's alchemical studies expand psychology's perspective on the unconscious and our understanding of the nature of the interactive field. Jung sees alchemy as the forerunner of our modern psychology of the unconscious. In The Psychology of the Transference (1946/1989), Jung identifies the psychological function of Khidr as an alchemical metaphor for conscious encounter with an archetype constellated in the transference between therapist and patient. This metaphor is deepened and amplified in Jung's 1942 Eranos lecture on "The Spirit Mercurius" (1948/1967). Mercurius, also known as quicksilver to the alchemists, is identified by Jung as Hermes, Wotan, a spiritus vegetativus, the anima mundi, and the lapis philosophorum. Khidr's important characteristics are to be seen in Mercurius' ambiguous (Mercurius duplex) nature and Jung's observation that "the paradoxical nature of Mercurius reflects an important aspect of self; it is essentially a complexio oppositorum" (Jung, 1946/1989). Von Franz (1972/1998) takes the Mercurius archetype further towards this study of Khidr in C. G. Jung: His Myth in Our Time. She discusses the greenness, the benedicta viriditas of Mercurius (and the Holy Spirit). Green, of course, is the meaning of Khidr's name.

The function of Mercurius is shown to be compensation for one-sidedness, which parallels Jung's interpretation of Moses and Khidr's archetypal relationship to each other. The Mysterium Lectures (1995) by Edward Edinger provides in-depth exploration of Jung's psychological interpretation of Mercury and the alchemical stages of transformation. A myth that Edinger calls the "Perigrinatio text" is examined, providing a valuable parallel to the Khidr and Moses journey and an interpretation tying the theme to clinical cases.

Jung's essay, "The Spirit Mercurius" (1948/1967), interprets the Roman threshold god, Mercury, as an alchemical metaphor for psychology that can be seen as a parallel figure to Hermes and Khidr. "The spirit Mercury in relation to the individuation process" (Paulsen, 1966, p. 115) extends Jung's (1948/1983, p. 195) psychological interpretation of a tale of encountering the archetype, "The Woodcutter's Son." Paulsen's comments on the implications of the archetype of Mercury's presence for the collective in contemporary times are well worth considering in the discussion on Khidr. In "Holding the Opposites," Tuby (1977) uses the Mercurius archetype to explore the role of the arcane substance in the opus alchemicum as a metaphor for the transference. The paradoxical nature of the metaphor, the appearance of the Hermaphroditic Rebis at once the fruit and staring point of the opus is difficult to understand because "alchemy is a protest against dualism," says Tuby (p. 13).

Schwartz-Salant's Jung on Alchemy (1995), a compilation of Jung's alchemical writings in topical categories and commentary, makes Jung's sometimes liminal thought process more accessible. Marvin Spiegelman, in Sufism and Jungian Psychology (1991), admits that Jung's somewhat ambivalent presentation of a crucial text in Islamic literature is brilliant, helpful, and appreciative, but he critiques Jung's statement that the Khidr story in the Qur'an reflects a "primitive cast of mind" attributed to the Prophet. Spiegelman's book is a useful contribution to an understanding of the Khidr story as it is interpreted in modern Sufism, in particular the Sufi Order of Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan.

Edinger's synthesis of Jung's basic ideas in Ego and Archetype (1972) provides an explanation of development along the ego-Self axis that furthers understanding of the Khidr-Moses story. Edinger uses classical images such as Elijah

being fed by ravens in the desert to discuss inflation, alienation, and encounter with the Self as a divine being in the wilderness. This perspective allows the Khidr figure to be interpreted as an archetype of Self in the individuation process. Jacobi develops Jung's concept of the nature of the archetype in Complex, Archetype and Symbol (1959). She discusses the "border zone" in which the conscious and unconscious realms touch or overlap as a "middle region " where synchronistic phenomena and the effects of the archetype are encountered (pp. 22-26).

Khidr, Religion, and Eros

Harris and Harris (1996) explore the transformative effect of suffering and the alchemical metaphor of the nigredo in the context of religion and psychology in Like Gold Through Fire. The Khidr story in the Koran is cited, framed within the Christian interpretation of the paradoxical nature of transformative suffering. An orthodox or fundamentalist Moslem might also see this superficial meaning of Sura 18 as a tale meant to inspire faith in the face of adversity, but it my intention to go deeper, following the lead of the Sufis and archetypal interpretation.

The spiritual aspect of the Khidr encounter may be understood as a religious conversion. William James (1985) in The Varieties of Religious Experience describes the psychological state of the "sick soul" using Tolstoy's despair as an example. James depicts conversion in words that echo the Khidr experience. The process is one of redemption, not of mere reversion to natural health, and the sufferer, when saved, is saved by what seems to him a second birth, a deeper kind of consciousness than he could enjoy before (p. 157). Lionel Corbett's The Religious Function of the Psyche (1996), offers a psychological model for the understanding of experience of the numinous. Problems that arise in clinical practice that come from suffering are

approached from a spiritual perspective in line with the questions on suffering posed by Khidr's seemingly criminal deeds. Corbett comments on James's observations about numinous experience, the realm of the psyche seeming to be one of contact between the human and the divine, and Jung's (1976) question, is God really a neurosis? Corbett replies,

Within our wounded-ness, our neurosis lies the numinosum. Hence our suffering is relevant to our spiritual search, and is often the beginning of it. This is because the complex has an archetypal component, and any archetype is an aspect of the Self. (p. 136)

John Haule's discussion of Khidr in Divine Madness (1990) looks at the psychological implications of the experience of passion, the intensely erotic affect that frequently accompanies the shift in the psyche in the presence of this archetype. Haule writes of an archetype of romance, "love's angel," being the mysterious agent producing the union of psychological opposites, and paralleling the Third in Jung's alchemical metaphor and Khidr in Corbin's writings. Love relationships as well as therapeutic ones are considered as capable of constellating a third entity within the space of transpersonal union. The encounter of the Persian poet and founder of Sufi mysticism, Jalaladin Rumi's encounter with Shams and subsequent and transformation is treated as psychological transformation by Jean Houston in The Search for the Beloved (1987).

Paradox

Paradox and anxiety are characteristic of the Khidr experience. The state of anxiety arises from the unknowing and ambiguity when the conscious encounters a reality that is unfamiliar. This unknowing place is where the shift may occur.

Winnicott repeatedly speaks of the importance of the analyst growing the capacity to

wait and to bear the tension of paradoxical truths shifting from stage to stage. Eigen in “Winnicott’s area of freedom” (Schwartz-Salant & Stein, 1991) develops the Winnicottian theory of transitional space. His discussion of the importance of the analyst bearing with paradox until transformation occurs evokes images of the relationship of Moses and Khidr.

To go to where the guardian of the unconscious bears means bearing with paradox. Jung’s concept of archetypes states that we may only know an archetype by its effects (Jacobi, 1959). To know a paradox must therefore require a particular, different kind of knowing. The paradox is the intervention of the divine, the experience of a disturbing constellated archetype. The encounter puts one’s consciousness into contact with madness and the divine. Hillman (1975) re-vision psychological pathology in a paradoxical mode, as the incarnating messages and presence of the gods forcing themselves into our awareness.

The paradoxical use of metaphor is suggested in psychotherapy to access a “listening landscape” where personality changes can occur at “active liminal turning points” (Cox & Theilgaard, 1987, p. 122). A radical newness, a calling into existence that which was not there before is called “poesis,” a term Heidegger refers to as a “bringing forth” with its primary source in Plato’s Symposium, developed as a construct of psychodynamics in Mutative Metaphors in Psychotherapy (Cox & Theilgaard).

Alden Josey’s (1995) “Burn in Fire, Wash in Water: Paradox and Ambiguity in the Work of Individuation.” Josey discusses Jung’s transcendent function as the confrontation of two positions generating a tension charged with energy and creating a living, third thing. This Third is what I identify as the transformative encounter with the Khidr archetype. It is “a movement out of the suspension between opposites,

a living birth that leads to anew level of being, a new situation” (1916/1969, p. 90). Josey concentrates on the Jungian understanding of how the unconscious responds to one-sidedness that develops through overvaluation of the conscious standpoint. Attention is given to the two kinds of thinking proposed by Jung in his epoch-making work, Symbols of Transformation (1912/1976). The distinction made between directed thinking and fantasy thinking allows the “possibility of prizing one kind of thinking over another to such an extent that our lives become trapped in a limiting psychic one-sidedness” (p. 3). Being able to let go of such an unbalanced psychic position seems to require a special time and place, liminal space or container, and some sort of encounter or confrontation with self.

The psychotherapist’s role in this work involving unknowing and paradox is discussed in Breakdown and Breakthrough (Field, 1996). In his discussion of psychotherapy and direct knowing, Field suggests a new perspective of psychotherapy, based on a fourth dimension of knowing or consciousness. The book considers the impact on psychotherapy of fundamental developments in scientific thinking, such as the move from the classical assumption of linear causation to nonlinear complexity. The direction he moves in includes relationships, different time-space categories and the alchemical metaphor of solve et coagula, meaning to break down so that you may build up. Field’s work serves to deepen my interpretation of several aspects of the Khidr myth.

Unknowing

Knowing the space of liminal encounter calls for a re-thinking of our legacy from Descartes. Rose points out that rapid technological and social changes have led to profound changes in reality perception (cited in Grolnick & Barkin, 1995). Robert

Romanyshyn in Technology as Symptom and Dream (1989) offers modern critique of dualistic, subject-object, linear thinking and the discovery of the vanishing point in terms of their effect on the soul. Without the boundary of the technologically imposed frame on our perceptions, the movement between the conscious and the unconscious, the imaginal and the concrete, it is possible that the imaginal would be appreciated for its reality rather than its liminality. Too much subjective, ego-bound consciousness creates discomfort and pathology when the unconscious, the dreaming underworld calls for balance. Our technological perspective has overshadowed the spiritual and aesthetic so that we experience anxiety near the border where Khidr posits nonlinear knowing.

Schwartz-Salant has written extensively in this area of liminality and unknowing. He states that “the sacrifice of knowing can enliven the field and bring forth its deeper archetypal dimension” (1995). Glen Slater (1996) proposes that the soul needs this special type of unknowing space and time. Unknowing and the depth psychological relationship to sacrifice are explored creatively in his dissertation. The soul’s need for unknowing is a need for a “pause,” to counter the literal hum of focused, literal consciousness (p. 230). Also, Slater states that “soulful events take place at the edges of things,” and he suggests imagery of the psychological place “where autonomous presences move in from the shadows” (p. 166).

The Stop (Appelbaum, 1995) presents a contemporary re-thinking of the difficult journey to a shift in knowing. Appelbaum considers Descartes and one-sided thinking in context of three dreams that Descartes had one night in 1619. In one of these dreams a stranger came to him and spoke three enigmatic words. “Est et non” (p. 72).

Appelbaum believes that the words are a dream-sign signifying that

at each moment the yes and no are conjoined. The conjunction itself differs in form and energy from either force. Et signifies an invisible third factor” and “it provides a conduit of novelty to the situation. Inner change through growth becomes possible” (p. 75).

Appelbaum also considers blind Oedipus’ meeting with the strangers at the crossroads, “a place of danger, and of possibility” in context with a transformative, but in this instance, failed, journey (p. 131). “Oedipus is unprepared for the crossroads. Avoidance preoccupies him” (p. 130). One-sided thinking leads the hero to refusal of the opportunity. He kills the old man. “He does not see that he is cut off from himself” (p. 130).

Hillman (1983) describes the function of images, saying that they have autonomy and reality as archetypal experience. “When an image is realized--fully imagined as a living being other than myself--then it becomes a psychopomp--a guide with a soul having its own inherent limitation and necessity”(p. 62). The psychopomp, Khidr, requires Moses’ silence, a sacrifice of his intellectual knowing, so that the higher intuitive function may join in the journey. The necessity of sacrificing the power of knowing in the psychoanalytic and alchemical field is explored in “On the Interactive Field as the Analytic Object”(Schwartz-Salant, 1995). An analysis of the clinical phenomenon of not-learning as a form of splitting, which Malcolm (1992) calls “slicing,” is based on Bion’s theory that “when the patient cannot reverse his perspective at once, he can resort to altering his perceptions (cited in Clinical Lectures on Klein and Bion, p. 121).

Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Buber are not depth psychologists, but offer stimulating speculations about encounter with the Other and the nature of inter-subjective space as factors in profound psychological shift. Buber’s thought on inter-subjectivity and his transformative encounter with the young man in Meetings (1973) is within the scope of this discussion. Levinas, however, goes more deeply

than Buber into the philosophy of the transcendence of the Other. Unlike Buber, Levinas does not believe that “I become through thou,” but that the self is awakened to its own being in the encounter. In The Rationality of Transcendence (1997), de Boer compares Buber and Levinas. Levinas' thought on “alterity,” the disturbing presence of the “Other,” provides opportunity to reevaluate and begin anew, the archetypal meaning of the Khidr experience.

Liminality and Transitional Phenomena (1991), which Schwartz-Salant edited with Murray Stein, provides several authors' essays contributing to an understanding of transformative space, thus the Khidr archetype encounter. In his newest work, The Mystery of Human Relationship (1998), Schwartz-Salant offers a innovative, depth psychological, and alchemical interpretation of the “third area” and its implications for a different universe of experience in non-Cartesian space.

Khidr as Contemporary Presence

How would Khidr appear today? In what role and what arena? By way of controversy, Ralph Lambourn Wilson (1991) proposes the idea of Khidr being present today as a trickster, an agent of change, in the collective unconscious. He says a “radical insanity” and a new perspective of reality could be activated by a global, archetypal Khidr who plays the role of an American Indian heokha, a contrary, a clown who moves in shamanistic shadow realm to set right the imbalances of society. Wilson cites the Sufis to imply that our modern relationship to life, to the world could be turned upside down by Khidr-consciousness. The archetype is an aspect of one's own being, possessing the capacity for simultaneous travel in this world and the world of imagination, “seeing each landmark, as in a dream, suffused with significance and

hidden knowledge” (p. 26). Wilson continues with the following, which I suggest, should be read with a cautious and discerning eye.

Nowadays Kheyr might be induced to reappear as the patron of modern militant environmentalism since he represents the nexus between the wilderness and the human realm. Rather than attempting to moralize nature, (which never works since nature is amoral), Khadirian environmentalism would thrive both in its utter wildness and its meaningfulness--nature as tajalli, the shining through of the divine into creation, the manifestation of each thing as divine light. (p. 24)

Wilson’s controversial view of Khidr as “the patron of modern militant environmentalism” is inconsistent with the conclusion reached after consideration of the extensive research presented here; neither does it jibe with the opinion of Islamists and Western scholars such as Mason.

Using metaphors of angels and of the Green Man to punctuate our ego consciousness, Romanyshyn (1994) invites our response. He looks at what he calls “shipwreck,” breakdown in life as descent into the unconscious, the province of poetic imagination. The angelic greenness is another form of consciousness, which depth psychology is trying to recover. Romanyshyn sees this as our response-ability to place the logos of psyche within the larger logos of the earth (ecology).

A trickster figure of archetypal psychology in his own right, James Hillman (1993) suggests a similar attitude towards Hermes as modern and necessary contemporary god of the collective consciousness in cyberspace. The idea of a contemporary location where Hermes, an archetypal figure like Khidr, might appear, is taken up by Ginette Paris in Pagan Grace (1990). She speaks of the seductiveness of the new spirit of cyberspace communication that lures bright minds to the computer world. Hermes was a thief, and computers are opening up new possibilities of crime

in a zone that is cerebral, without boundaries, and at home in the ether, the home of the winged messenger of the Gods, Mercurius.

Murray Stein introduces the archetypal Hermes into Jungian psychotherapeutic interpretation as an imaginal presence constellated during the tumultuous time of midlife passage. His book, *In Midlife* (1983) looks at transition as a time associated with crisis, anger, dissolution, and change. This is followed by hints of a fresh spirit, renegade, mischievous, that scoffs at established routines. This new spirit--whom we must call Hermes--disrupts a life and alarms family and friends. Finally with luck, a deep transformation occurs, as the personality adjusts to the influx of Hermes and his gifts.

Bernie Neville, in "The Charm of Hermes: Hillman, Lyotard, and the Postmodern Condition" (1992), argues that "the image and energy which shape the postmodern condition are a specific archetypal image and energy--those of Hermes, god of thieves, travellers, and scholars" (p. 338). He explains that the perspective of archetypal theory "tends to elaborate images rather than develop logical arguments" (p. 338). Neville refers us to Jung's idea of psychological inflation, in which the personality is taken over by a single archetypal pattern, an idea that may be applied analogously to cultural inflation. Our society is suffering from the pathology of a "Hermes inflation" (Neville, 1992, p. 347). It is the place of the depth psychologist to wonder if and how we can identify the myth at the society or organizational level, and work through it to give expression to the positive aspects of the archetypal energy.

Summary

There is little knowledge of or writing on Khidr or on the psychological interpretation of this mythologem outside of the Islamic world. The Qur'an and

religious commentary, Middle Eastern folklore, and mystical theology and poetry of the Sufis are sources to inform us. Non-Islamic sources of Judaism, the Gilgamesh Epic, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and other parallel myths are to be considered to deepen the archetypal level of this hermeneutic. Psychological literature offers interpretation of transformation and experience of encounter with an “Other” associated with a liminal, altered state of consciousness.

The work will be to discover the meaning and create a hermeneutic of the Khidr mythologem. It is necessary to differentiate the character of Khidr from other archetypal figures. The encounter with the stranger in the desert, the ensuing trials and transformation described in the myth are to be traced in a manner so as to inform and enliven a depth psychological understanding of this fascinating figure from Islam.

Chapter 3 Islamic Sources of the Khidr Myth

Introduction to Khidr

This chapter essentially corresponds to the chapter in a quantitative dissertation in which data and sources are presented preceding discussion and analysis. The religion and culture in which Khidr is known will be examined, with emphasis on the story in the Qur'an, followed by an introduction to Khidr's role in Islamic mysticism and poetry. Included are amplifications of certain images that enrich perception of the subtle shades of the topic.

Who, or what, is Khidr? Most non-Moslems have never heard this name, nor are they comfortable pronouncing it. Even after the myth is related to them, my listeners seem disconcerted and awkward. There is confusion and unknowing about who Khidr is, and what might be the importance of such an obscure, strange myth to depth psychology. The reactions encountered during the writing of this dissertation confirm for me that Khidr is in need of an introduction to the Western world.

The goal of this chapter is to introduce this shadowy, Middle Eastern stranger as he is seen through different mythic windows. Beginning with Khidr in Islam, I shall present his mode of appearance in the Middle East, then move to the development of his mystical role in Sufism.

There is a shift in awareness associated with certain encounters. These encounters occur in a liminal place. The liminal place is beyond the threshold of consciousness (thresholds being the limen of the door). Meetings with a numinous or strange and soul stirring "Other" may occur in dreams or the altered state of visions, or while traveling, in illness, crisis, or psychological disorientation. The question "who is Khidr?" must be followed closely by that of "when and where is Khidr?"

He is encountered in moments of when there is a sense of otherworldly time and space.

“Khidr is the witness to the here beyond the where” confides Mason (personal communication, 1998). His domain is between consciousness and unconsciousness, the “betwixt and between” in Turner’s (1982) phrase for liminality, at the boundary zone between the real and the unformed world. Such encounters may be haunting and unforgettable, and may leave permanent changes on one’s personality, perspective, or life direction. The “Other” encountered in the Khidr myth is an important figure psychologically, not just for the Moslem psyche but as an active archetypal form of wisdom and healing for the collective psyche.

The Name of Khidr

Who is Khidr? Somewhere between the highest watermark of the ocean’s sweep of the shore and the lowest ebb of the tide he walks and waits alone, a mysterious stranger called “the Verdant One,” in Arabic “Al-Khadir,” meaning the Green One, or in Persian, “Khizr.” Khidr is a threshold guardian, in the manner of the Greek Hermes, but a distinctly Islamic figure, and a spiritual guide, or murshid to the worthy.

A bearded man wearing robes of green may be seen in Persian illustrations. He is sometimes with Elijah the Prophet, seated comfortably on flowered carpets by a bubbling fountain of water in which there are two fish. The color green is believed to be a reference to Khidr’s immortality, which he achieved by drinking from the well of Eternal Life. The name “al-Khidr” is translated from the Arabic root kh-d-r for the color green, as “the Verdant one.” Variants of Khidr’s name in Semitic tongues occur as Khezer, Khizr, Chidher, Al-Khadir, al-Akhdar, and Khudr. The name .

“Al-Khadir” also evokes the liturgical color of Islam, the spiritual green also referring to Khidr’s protection of sailors on the “Tres Verte,” on the sea, (Massignon, 1955). The sea is Khidr’s domain, he is mukallaf fi’l bahr the guardian of the sea (Mayet, 1994, p. 8) whereas Elijah is patron saint of the land. Not only the sea, but all water, springs, fountains, rain, and bowls of water are associated with Khidr’s name. His home is a green island in the middle of the seas. Fittingly, green is the color of the national flag of Saudi Arabia, home of the Holy of Holies, the Ka’aba in Mecca. This national standard displays a deep green background, bearing in contrasting white Arabic characters, the words of the Moslem statement of faith, “There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet.

The color green is clearly a key to Khidr’s identity. The next section will consider some of the images and implications of greenness.

The Color Green

An amplification of the name of Khidr as “green” opens a space in the, psyche for this figure. The color green is associated with earth, the sea, and vegetative life in Western culture, thus it is imagined as lower than the blue of the sky, white clouds and the golden orb of the sun. This is a reversal of Western imagery, where one thinks of descending to touch the green, moist, warm, realm of the living vegetable kingdom. Green is found below, in deepness just as Gilgamesh dove to the bottom of the sea to retrieve the plant of eternal life. In the world of Khidr, however appears as higher wisdom, Life and Eternity, a color to ascend to. One may recall Goethe’s words

All theory, my friend is grey,
But green life’s golden tree.

(quoted in Jung, 1945/1967, p. 320)

The Tree of Life in Kabbalistic mysticism and the Philosophical Tree of Life of the alchemists are wonderful plants, plants of knowledge and immortality like the plant Gilgamesh retrieved from the sea's bottom. The Kabbalistic tree, the Etz ha-Chaim, is properly depicted upside down, with the highest spiritual levels below the earth. So, too, the alchemists believed that the roots of the tree were where the gold would be found.

Reversal of spiritual descent/ascent imagery is found in the Merkabah (Chariot) mysticism of the Jewish Kabbalists. That tradition is believed to have been transmitted by midnight visitations of Elijah the Prophet, a parallel figure to Khidr in legend. In an ancient Mesopotamian practice that has survived in Jewish lore, one climbs to a rooftop at night to offer prayer and ascend spiritually, then descend from the ecstatic experience back to the secular world (Abusch, 1995, p. 21). This reverses the Western image of descending to the underworld, to the Inferno, or descending into the unconscious as Jung described. Paradox abounds in the green realm, and this is not surprising since a paradoxical figure appears as a parallel to Khidr in Mercurius duplex. The alchemical Mercurius is "also the tree or its spiritus vegetativus (Jung, 1948/1967, p. 279), suggesting that the appearance of the color green herald the conscious perception of a window opening into a reality where means may be easily reversed.

Perception of location of color is a paradox simulating the multiplicity of possible refraction and fractals in the light spectrum that chaos theory and quantum physics have only recently begun to recognize. A dream occurred during the re-working of this chapter which showed my dissertation advisor supporting my work with the words, "Remember, Khidr is everywhere." At that moment I espied a cloaked man moving along with a bright green parrot on his head. The parrot

evokes a pirate, a liminal figure beyond the boundary of civilized society, as well as the image of the green parrot representing Khidr in the poems of Rumi and Hafiz. The dream indicated Khidr's insistence on his presence being recognized, and once again, the significance of the color green.

Green is the color of duality, perfect for a paradoxical figure such as Khidr. Green is dual because it is composed from yellow, the last of the warm colors, and blue, the first of the cold colors. Green is associated with both life and decay. As life, it appears with the new foliage of spring; as decay, it is the color displayed by the mould on rotting vegetation. Egyptian mythology attributes this color to Osiris, the God of vegetation and death. The Greeks linked it to Hermaphrodite, who is reputed to be the offspring of blue Hermes and yellow Aphrodite. (Wilkes, 1997, p. 29). Green is the color of Creator Spiritus (1912/1976, p. 437) and of the serpent mercurialis of the alchemists (Jung, 1950/1980, p. 311). The snake is not only related to the god of revelation, Hermes, but as a vegetation numen, calls forth the "blessed greenness," the alchemical "veriditas," of life (Jung, 1961, p. 210). The snake symbolizes the numen of the transformative act as well as the transformative substance itself (1912/1976, p. 436).

Green is "a frequency, a vibration, a radiance of the world's consciousness, perhaps even the first vibration of consciousness in color"... "greenness is a frequency of vegetable consciousness, a wisdom of its own" (Romanyshyn, 1994, p. 1). In a relationship with greenness, echoing the encounter with Khidr, Romanyshyn remarks that "we, with proper respect and humility, become aware of ourselves as gifted with a wisdom of which we are not the makers" (p. 2). He suggest that other spiritual realities such as angels interact with us on different harmonies and color frequencies in a manner that creates ego consciousness, and change that occurs in breakdown or

psychological “shipwreck” (p. 5). The mystical journey is to “come out towards oneself,” according to Corbin (1962/1994), to ascend out of the well where the visio smaragdina arises, the vision of the green emerald is perceived (p. 61). The Book of Revelations (4:3) says “And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” The emerald Tablets of Hermes Trismegistus, the alchemical Middle Eastern mystery teachings flow into this greening of our knowing.

In the encounter with Khidr as a numinosum, perception of a certain familiar earthy frequency occurs, just as with any religious phenomenon. Both are primordial, original datum which Corbin says are “like the perception of a color or a sound, which cannot be ‘explained’ by a causal derivation from something else” (Corbin, 1958/1969, p. 57). The island of emerald, the green stone upon which where the Imam awaits his time, is located in “the land of Hyperborea, ruled by Khezer” (Wilson, 1988, p. 64); in Sufism this represents meeting Khidr, the greening of the personal moment of awakening into reality, of rebirth in the knowledge of self.

The color green, finally, is an alchemical green, the viriditas, a state of the life-force, the anima mundi that impresses Jung in a 1939 vision of the green-gold Christ who appears at the foot of the bed (1961, pp. 210-211). It is this greenish-gold color of Christ as filius macrocosmi that so struck Jung that he found in it assurance that there exists “a union of spiritual alive and physically dead matter” (p. 211). In another tale cited by Jung, the fitting end to the travels of Alexander the Great was to build a golden palace where he found a tree of “glorious greenness” (viriditas gloriosa) (Jung, 1954/1983, p. 315). Paradox in greenness as opus contra naturam appears in this image also, for the very leaves of the gloriously green tree grow inwards. Green is a mercurial, chthonic, dual natured, spiritual, and physical color. With healing of the ecology and the greening of the soul in mind, an amplification of

the green frequency on the spectrum, incarnated as intense color in the figure of al-Khidr, the Verdant One, the color is clearly rich with life. Gilgamesh went to the Green Mountain where he had a dream. A Jewish myth about a green boy connects green with the body (Covitz, 1971, p. 61). Green is the color of generative nature. Green is the color of the spirit, the color of Venus, and the green cloak in which Dante dresses Beatrice. The color of Osiris who is a lord of souls and death (as well as vegetation is also green. Green, therefore, combines a set of antithetical tendencies: life and death, nature and spirit, body and soul (p. 62). The green color associated with Khidr is most probably connected with Islam's holy color and the evergreen symbolic of eternal life.

Characteristics of Khidr

Khidr is one of the four holy ones who do not die: Enoch, Idris, Elias/Elijah, and Khidr (some sources state Jesus instead of Idris). Khidr, like the Wandering Jew of Central European legend is expected to wander the earth until the End of Time, at which moment he will die and subsequently be resurrected. It is believed that the only one who can guide the traveler to the miraculous water of immortality is Khidr. He is the "Evergreen One," who never dies but reappears from time to time as a sort of avatar, to set right the more monstrous forms of wrong and to protect the upright. Khidr can speak every language, be in several places simultaneously, and become invisible whenever he desires. He is identified with Phineas, the son of Eleazar, as well as with Elijah the prophet, and with St. George (Hanauer, 1935; Haddad, 1969). Jewish mothers invoke him as "Eliyahu ha Navi," Christian as "Mar Jiryis" and Moslem as "El Khudr" (Wilson, 1991, p. 46).

Whatever the origin of the name, scholars such as Friedlaender (1915) conclude that the figure of Khidr as conceived in Islam is not derived from one definite source. It is rather the composite of a large number of legends and myths of widely divergent origin and character, which were current in the lands of Islam prior to the Mohammedan occupation. The Qur'anic story may be traced back to three main sources, the Gilgamesh Epic, the Alexander romance, and the Jewish legend, a midrash, of Elijah and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi (Gibb & Kramers, 1961). These and selected myths paralleling the Khidr story will be considered for better appreciation of the ancient and archaic nature of this archetype.

Khidr is identified with an angelic being, referred to as "the servant of God," who makes a brief but impressive appearance in the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam. As a figure in Moslem religious literature and popular folklore, Khidr has larger-than-life credentials and otherworldly numinousity. "If you see a very old man with a long white beard walking with a stick, it may just be Al-Khidir" (Knappert, 1985, p. 10). "Al-Hidhir," as he is sometimes called, is identified in legend "even with Aristotle, the Greek philosopher who taught Alexander the Great, called in Arabic Aliskander Dhu 'l Karnayn" (Knappert, p. 10). "Al-Khidr was immortal, like Ahasverus, and wandered all over the earth, visiting every country, once every five hundred years" (Knappert, p. 10). Khidr is one of the four holy immortals: Enoch, Khidr, Elijah, and Idris, although some sources cite a different four (with Mary and Jesus). Khidr was the vizier of Dhu-l-karain, the "two horned" (the Syro-Arabic title of Alexander the Great) who discovered the Fountain of life which his master had failed to find (Friedlaender, 1915, p. 693).

Before opening the door to the Sufi's mystical, poetic world where Khidr is a guide, I shall present an introduction to the fundamental character of Khidr as he

presents himself in the Qur'an and traditional Islamic teachings. This should provide a sense of how this unnamed "servant of God" has been identified by the Moslem world.

The Qur'an

Our knowledge of Khidr is drawn primarily from a story from the eighteenth chapter or Sura entitled The Cave (al-Khaf), quoted from the Sale (1877) translation of the Qur'an. I have reproduced that version in my prologue. To simplify referencing, the numbering of verses used in the Shakir (1995) translation have been inserted. Drawing on traditional Islamic commentary (hadith) and folklore amplify the myth for our understanding.

The story of Khidr appears in the center of the Sura, placed strategically "in the place of the middle" between two distinct yet related stories. This central trilogy has been referred to as "the Apocalypse of Islam" (Massignon, 1955, p. 142). The three tales are: the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, the journey of Moses and an anonymous wise man, believed to be Khidr, and the tale of Dhu'lQarnayn, sometimes identified as Alexander the Great, or by Jung (1939/1944) as Moses, in the continuation of the journey. One might imagine the story being told aloud as narrative.

It is helpful to hear the story told, to imagine listening to the narrative. The Islamic holy book was and still is primarily taught orally, chanted daily in the singsong, achromatic scale of Middle Eastern prayer that can irresistibly pull at an unsuspecting Westerner's heart. Anyone who has ever heard the haunting call of the muezzin from the minaret at the five times of prayer each day, reminding the faithful of the greatness, mercy, and compassion of Allah, knows the voice in which the story

of Khidr is best heard. Sura 18, containing the tale of Khidr and Moses, is read each Friday in mosques all over the world. The narrative, which was received by the Prophet Mohammed from the angel Gabriel in 622 CE, Moses' encounter with Khidr is preceded by another enigmatic and mystical tale, that of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. The cave in Ephesus where the Seven Sleepers concealed themselves for 309 years is the referent for the chapter's title.

The passage which follows the narrative of Khidr's journey with Moses concerns a person called Dhu'lkarnein, the two-horned. Commentators on the Qur'an state that refers to Alexander the Great. Jung believes this to be the one and the same Moses of the preceding section, said to have two horns because of a mistranslation of the word for beams of light as horns (cornu) that emanate from the head of the Hebrew prophet.

It is important for understanding the objective of this dissertation, the meaning of the appearance of Khidr, to know the story of Moses' journey with this "servant of God" from the Qur'an in its entirety. To this end I initially prepared a reproduction of the pertinent verses from Sura 18. It then became obvious that my hermeneutic of the myth is needed for this work, not one of several published translations of the Arabic text. The Qur'an is actually not considered translated or translatable from the original oral narrative form in Arabic as transmitted through the Prophet Mohammed. Every edition on the Qur'an in English is rendered as "the meaning" of the glorious Qur'an and not a "translation."

Every translator offers nothing less than a personal hermeneutic. In keeping with this tradition I am offering my understanding of Sura 18:62-85 based on numerous close readings of several published editions in English. The version of the Qur'an I have used most frequently and grown fondest of is that of Sale (1877), for

his rich commentary, and his plentiful annotations. His traditional, formal use of language carries the awe and respect for the Holy that the King James Version of the Bible expresses.

Khidr in the Islamic World

It may occur to the casual reader that this myth is enigmatic and frustrating. It provokes and gives pause, like the riddle of the Sphinx. It tweaks the rational mind and evokes a sense of “otherness” and mystery. Khidr is, first of all, a figure known and revered by the Islamic world. After making that statement, it occurs to me that it might be useful to mention that the Arabic word Islam itself means “surrender.” The Khidr story is indeed about surrender to the will of God. Khidr is not the same as Elijah or St. George with whom he is often identified, nor is he another form of Hermes or Mercurius. What is Khidr’s meaning? He is “a legend followed differently by every person”(Mayet, 1994, p. 6). Nothing can be said about Khidr with confidence. “This is exactly what the Sura al-Khaf (The Cave) is trying to convey to us; uncertainty. In all events, a sole ideation has become entrenched in the minds of nearly every Moslem. Al-Khidr has become a prophet to some, an angel to others, and a saint to the rest” (Mayet, 1994, pp. 6-7)

Who is Khidr to the people who believe in him, the Moslems? Or better, what appears to the Moslems as Khidr? This is the question Karl Keryeni (1944/1992) poses about Hermes for the Greeks, in his comprehensive study of the classical Greek deity. By paraphrasing and formulating the question following the example of Keryeni, we are assuming only that the name of Khidr corresponds to something, to a reality, at least to a reality of the soul. Likewise one must recognize the historical

fact that for the Moslems Khidr is not a formless power. He is something very precise, at least since the time of Mohammed; he possesses a distinctly delineated personality.

Islamic traditional understanding of the story of Khidr in the Qur'an is found in hadith (tradition, commentaries on Qur'an, similar to the Talmud in Judaism). Neo-Orthodox belief states that the story of Khidr and Moses has been related in such a way as supply the lesson of obedience, faith, and surrender. The Khidr story has its legal, fundamental, rational perspective, a popular one in the 20th-century Moslem world, represented symbolically by Moses. The psychological polar opposite in perspective is what it appears that Khidr represents, This is the teaching that has been developed by the Moslem mystics, the Sufis.

It appears that a certain amount of information about Khidr and his active role in popular belief may be gleaned from scholarly works on religious and mythological texts and studies of geographical sites of Khidr/Elijah worship. An interesting insight from these sources, given the concern with psychotherapy as care of the soul driving this dissertation, that one of the shrines devoted to Khidr, near Bethlehem, is "a sort of madhouse. Deranged persons of all the three faiths were taken thither, and chained in the courtyard of the chapel" (Hanauer, 1935, p. 47). This was before the British occupation of Palestine (and clearly before managed care), for it is reported that they were kept for 40 days and given bread and water. For time to time the Greek priest at the head of the establishment now and then reading the Gospel over them or administering a whipping (p. 47).

An association between Khidr and mental illness was not uncommon in popular worship. Given the shamanic quality of the journey into the wilderness embarked upon by the hero, Moses, seeking divine knowledge, the connection is not surprising. The journey is a solitary venture once the liminal encounter with the

angelic Khidr occurs. The servant Joshua ben Nun is left behind. Later Moses and Khidr separate, and Moses is left alone. This same individual path to be walked alone is seen in other stories of the hero's journey, such as Gilgamesh's solitary quest, Alexander the Great and Khidr parting ways, and Elijah's leave-taking of his companion at Beersheva to go into the wilderness by himself. The need to go it alone echoes throughout the long hallway of individuation, as we will see in the following discussion.

There is often some confusion about the "Green Man," a vegetation god of European legend and Khidr's name in translation. Anderson's (1990) extensive research on the green man as an architectural embellishment makes two brief references to Khidr. "It is pure conjecture to see the influence of the story of Khidr on the subsequent development of the Green Man," states Anderson (p. 76). There was admittedly European contact with Islam and therefore most likely with the Khidr myth, through trade and the Crusades to the Middle East, but the Green Man of leafy visage who peers from walls of Christian churches appears to be of independent origin.

Khidr's origins may be associated with an ancient fertility deity, an assumption drawn from the identification of Khidr with St. George in the Levant (Haddad, 1969, p. 21). The term "georgic" itself refers to an agrarian socio-economic class, "comprising all those who are preoccupied with food production and the provision of living by coming into direct contact with nature" (p. 22). It appears that Khidr and Elijah share the same feast celebration in popular worship in early spring, a time associated with agricultural activities and fertility of all life. Source differ on the exact date, either May 5, or April 23, (Gibb et. al, 1960, quoted in Mayet, 1994, p. 10, and Haddad, 1969, p. 28). The variance most likely arises from different reckoning

of calendars, lunar or solar, Western or Islamic, in addition to idiosyncrasies of rural localities. In any case, the name given to this festival in parts of Turkey is “Khizriliyas” (Khidr-Elias), a single saint. Fairy tales, children’s nursery rhymes and prayers well up contents of the unconscious offering the conscious evidence of unseen guests hovering nearby at the moment. For the purposes of this study, Khidr is best approached as a gift of the Moslem world to and through the collective consciousness, and as such will be invited for presentation as a uniquely Islamic form of an archetypal figure.

The research results of this study reveal that a different approach needs to be taken to truly come close to envisioning Khidr’s image. Tasneem Mayet, a Pakistani Moslem, writes that the average Easterner becomes intimidated by the surge of Western technology and “begins to feel ashamed of those ideas that do not seem logical to the Western scientist. Beliefs of Khidr are suppressed but clearly not eliminated” (Mayet, 1994, p. 11). “Neo-orthodox Sunni Islam has locked al-Khidr up in a dark trunk and left him in a dark corner in a dark corner”(Mayet, p. 7). Western technology has influenced the Arab world with its rationalistic disregard for the intuitive world where Khidr dwells. “Technological advancement has created an “impactuous cavity corroding at the heart of the average Easterner” (Mayet, p. 5).

The preceding introduction to the mythologem provides a basis for discussion of the psychological meaning of Khidr as an archetypal figure and recognition of this very tangible character as much as it is possible to describe the spirit and mercurial quintessence that animates any archetypal form. Khidr is, above all, Islamic. A mysterious narrative found in the center of Chapter 18 of the Qur’an is the place of introduction to this enigmatic stranger. Folklore of the Middle East keeps the figure of Khidr alive in popular imagination, but it is the mystics of the

Moslem world who have a viable relationship with him. Mayet comments that most Islamic authors mention Khidr but “few dare to go beyond what has already been said” (1994, p. 10). Those who do go further are the Sufis, the mystics in love with God. Their relationship with Khidr as a spiritual guide is our next level of introduction, moving us deeper into his timeless realm.

Khidr in Sufism

The belief in an immortal being who appears as a spiritual guide is found in many religions. In Judaism there is the Prophet Elijah; in Christianity, it is Jesus; in Hinduism, Krishna; and in the New World, Native Americans tell of guidance from Raven and other spirit animals. For the Moslem, particularly one who longs for more than fundamental practice of the faith, there is another way to walk the straight path, shari'ah, of Islam. Within interstices between ritual ablutions, the five daily prayers, recitation of Qur'an and pilgrimages, the image of Khidr as a murshid or spiritual guide may appear to the individual seeker. The soul opened by desire for deeper contact with the divine may feel drawn to a circle of mystics. Throughout the Islamic world, groups of spiritually hungry men and women have formed, known as the Sufis, usually as disciples around a holy man. The Sufis believe that Khidr has a special role to play in the spiritual life. He may appear, if they are worthy, to invest them with the spiritual mantle, the kirqua. For an understanding of how Khidr has developed in Islamic imagination, it is useful to have some familiarity with the teachings and terminology of Sufism.

In the heart of the Sufi mystics of Islam, Khidr is the spiritual guide, the psychagogue, (soul-guide), who represents and witnesses Wisdom whom those familiar with Jung's inner journey will recognize as Elijah/Philemon (Jung,

1961/1973, pp. 181-184). It is of psychological interest that the time and place when Khidr is met tends to be distressful, confusing, as Moses felt when he was tired and hungry and yet was compelled to make a long trip back to a rock in the wilderness where a strange event occurred. Moses' perception was already compromised, his threshold to unconscious contents lowered, when the man on the rock entered his life to alter it forever. When a distressing situation arises, "the corresponding archetype will be constellated in the unconscious" (Stevens, 1993, p. 14)

The research for this aspect of Khidr leads me to concur with the Harvard Islamist and author of several scholarly works on the Moslem faith, Anne-Marie Schimmel, that "the phenomenon called Sufism is so broad and its appearance so protean that nobody can venture to describe it fully" (1975, p. 3). As a form of mysticism, it has as many facets as light can reflect. The West first came to know of the mystical practice of Islam through the ritual dance of the Whirling Dervishes and translations of Sufi poets such as Hafiz and Rumi. The Sufis call their path tasawwuf, which is translated loosely as Sufism. The derivation from suf, wool, is now generally accepted, for the coarse woolen garment of the first generation of Moslem ascetics (Schimmel, 1975, p. 14). The earliest Sufi saints are thought to be the companions of the Prophet Mohammed (d. 632 CE) who lived a simple, ascetic lifestyle. By the fourth Islamic century (tenth century CE), the Sufi way was already documented in a major collection of the lives of Sufi saints by al-Sulami (Schimmel, 1975, p. 14).

What is important about Sufism for this study is that it reveals Khidr's character in his relationship with the individual seeker who is filled with desire to follow the path to higher wisdom. Khidr is the murshid, the personal guide of select, sincere souls. When Khidr is encountered personally, the mystic may be granted the

spiritual kirqua. In Sufi circles, an aspirant may only don the kirqua after being considered worthy. “The usual color of the kirqua was dark blue, a practical color for travel. In certain circles mystics would chose for their frocks a color that corresponded to their mystical station,” says Schimmel (1975, p. 102). “ ‘He who wears green’ has always been an epithet for those who live on the highest possible spiritual level-be they angels, the Prophet, or Khidr, the guide of the mystics” (p. 102).

There are three ways in which a seeker may enter the mystic teachings in Sufism. First, by proving worthiness to a mentor, second, by acceptance into a Sufi order, or third, by being granted the mantle through a direct encounter with Khidr. Schimmel (1992, p. 105) advises;

One should not forget, too, that certain Sufis claimed to be travelling the Path without formal initiation. They were called uwaysi, recalling the Prophet’s contemporary Uways al-Qarani in Yemen. But even in this case, some legally inclined mystics would hold that the mystic was ‘spiritually’ initiated by the Prophet despite the distance, for initiation by a non-visible master or by a saint who had died long ago was considered possible in Sufi circles.

The solitary Sufi’s encounter with Khidr and the journey of the uwaysi, without formal initiation is important to our discussion of Khidr as an archetypal figure.

Western idealization of the independent individual forging ahead into unknown frontiers, the image of the John Wayne character riding off alone, is a paradigm that honors the solitary journeyer. This solitary aspect of the less common Sufi’s path is associated with the intervention of Khidr as an otherworldly guide. In the West, as in other cultures, there are myths and contemporary moments of breakthrough into a different way of perceiving, which involve encounter with a

pivotal personality of an ambiguous or mysterious nature. The Sufi acceptance of a “spiritual initiation by an unseen master” suggests an Islamic description of the individuation process involving contact with unconscious contents as described by Jung (1961/1973) of his “descent” to the underworld and encounter with his psychopomp during Advent, 1913 (p. 179).

What may be gleaned from the teachings and experience of the Sufi is the powerful, personal relationship of the seeker’s soul to Khidr. The individuals who have made the journey tell us in true Khidr fashion, in elliptical allusions, metaphors and passionate poetry of the effect of an encounter with Khidr. The poetry of Sufi mystics such as Rumi and Hafiz evokes Khidr’s presence. He appears by name as often as hidden in simile and metaphor. Mayet, who has a greater familiarity with Moslem literature than this writer, comments that in prose, Khidr reflects a “painfully sad nature”(1992, p. 20). “One should rather pity Khizr and his immortal companions, as they have no hope of dying and being rescued from this miserable life,” muses Ghalib (Schimmel, 1992, p. 72).

The Sufi poet Wali writes
O Alexander, don’t seek the water of Life, whose guardian Khizr is-
This water is nothing but eloquence. (Schimmel, 1992, p. 363)

It seems that waiting and suffering, in patience, are lessons associated with Khidr’s presence. Since Khidr must stay alive until the end of time, this means he must bear the loss of mortal friends and lovers through death. In one of Kalim’s ghazals, we read that “for the ahl-dil, the true possessors of a heart, it is preferable to die thirsty at the brink of the Fountain of Life than to participate in Khizr’s eternal life” (Schimmel, 1992, p. 346). Qasim-I Kahi writes

The life of the true lover would be longer than that of Khizr,
If he would count the days of separation as life (Schimmel, 1992, pp. 72-73)

Given immortality and divine knowledge, Khidr has seen through enough injustice and pain to learn that what seems unjust, may later have a good outcome. Thus “portrayed as a sufferer of unending worldly existence, al-Khidr is more overly considered a hero (Mayet, 1994, p. 21). Khidr is one of those who “willingly took the suffering upon themselves for the sake of God” and thus - as mentioned in the Koran itself - prefigure the Prophet of Islam, who had to suffer until he was given victory thanks to his ‘beautiful patience’ (Sura 12:18). Patience and bearing pain become the model for the faithful, for the seeker of divine truth and, as Schimmel points out, for the lover (quoted in Mayet, 1994, p. 21).

The cup is a favorite metaphor for the Sufis, expressed in poetry as the vessel of wine, which, when drunk, granted esoteric knowledge. Was it knowledge or immortality that compelled Moses? Perhaps the first creates a certainty of the latter, as Jung came to peace with the prospect of his own death and mortality after many years of seeking and acquiring secular and supra-ordinary wisdom. The Jam-I Jam, the “world-showing goblet,” through which the ruler Jamshed acquired knowledge of the events on earth, was an earlier form of the cup. Ghalib (Schimmel, 1992, p. 109) wrote in 19th century Delhi

Give me a kiss from your lips and ask me for Khizr’s life
(immortality)!
Put a goblet of wine before me,
and ask me about Jam’s cheerful life!

In Moslem poetry, the cup of the quest recalling the Grail legend, holds the wine of all knowledge and is called Jam-I Jam, the world-showing cup. (It has recently been suggested in Iran that Jam-I Jam be the term for the modern technological instrument of the television (Schimmel, 1992, p. 109).

Rain

The image of rain reappears throughout this excursion into the Khidr myth scriptural and legends of Elijah. All three figures are said to bring rain. Rain is a symbol of water from the heavens, a life-bringing element that renews and cleanses. In a concrete way, rain is part of the popular worship and the folklore about Khidr and St. George, and in the Book of Kings, the scriptural Elijah, so closely identified with Khidr in Islam, witnesses in awe the rain of the Almighty, from his cave on holy Mount Horeb. The farmers and husbandmen of what was Palestine, the ones who cleave closest to the earth, have a prayer chanted directly to Khidr and Elijah:

My lord Khidr, the green one,
Water our green plants.
My lord Mar-Elias
Water our dry plants. (Haddad, 1969, p. 29)

The rain joins heaven and earth and breaks the tension of the opposites in nature as well as in alchemical metaphor.

Annemarie Schimmel offers some beautiful insights on the imagery of rain in the land where Khidr is with his own. "People who live in cool, humid zones do not always easily understand, let alone enjoy, the numerous verses in praise of rain as the sign of mercy, which quickens the parched soil, as it is experienced in the countries of the Middle East" (Schimmel, 1992, p. 202). "It is possible to draw cross-relations between the ocean, the rain showers, and the Water of Life, which is hidden in the darkness and can only be found when Khizr guides the thirsty" (p. 207). The rain quickens the dead hearts of unbelievers, as it brings fertility and fragrance to gardens. It may also bring dangerous flash floods, a metaphor Sufi poets enjoy for "the complete eradication of the matter-bound self" (p. 203). The Water of Life can be

found only after overcoming the most terrible obstacles and surviving frightful adventures, for it is hidden in deepest darkness (p. 71).

The heart that by night found life from the cup of the morning draft
Pointed to Khizr and blackness and the Water of Life.

(Hafiz, Diwan, p. 47, quoted in Schimmel, 1975, p. 345)

Khidr is associated with rain and water, not only the Spring of Eternal Life. He is the patron of the sea and frequently appears by the river or seaside. The Water of Eternal Life is the aqua permanes of the alchemists, guarded by Khidr in the secret place of “non-where” beyond the cosmic Mount Khaf, described by Suhrawardi and Ibn ‘Arabi. Wherever the water of Eternal life is mentioned in Sufi poetry, Khidr’s name is not far away.

The poetry of the Sufis is laced with images of the eternal one, Khidr, the beloved guide of the mystics. The literature of the Middle East reached Europe where it influenced none other than Goethe. In the beginning of his *West-Ostlicher Divan*, Goethe sings:

Unter Liebem Trinken. Singen
Soll dich Chisrs Quell verjuengen.

While loving, drinking, and singing,
Khidr’s fountain shall rejuvenate you. (Schimmel, 1992, p. 71)

For sheer delight in metaphor and symbolic imagery, Ghazal 37 from the *Diwan of Hafiz* (trans. 1995, p. 115) stirs the imagination and evokes the blessed encounter with Khidr:

Ho, O parrot, speaker of secrets!
May your beak never lack sugar!

May you live long, your heart be happy forever,
For you have shown us a lovely image of his figure.

You spoke in riddles with the companions,
For God's sake, lift the veil from this enigma.

O bright luck, splash our face with rosewater,
For we are stained with sleep.

What melody did the minstrel play
That the drunk and sober dance together?

Because the saki laced the wine with opium
The companions lost their heads and turbans.

They kept the water of life from Alexander.
It cannot be found with force and gold.

Although reason is the currency of existence,
How can it compare to love, the work of the alchemists?

Come and listen to the state of the anguished ones
Who speak with few words and much meaning.

The literal translation of the phrase "may you live long" is "may your head be green" is a wordplay on the color of the parrot, and by association, evocative of the immortal green one, Khidr. A literal translation of the phrase "bright luck" is "awake (good) luck" suggesting a shift from the unconscious state. To awaken a sleeper, (think of the Seven Sleepers) one sprinkles rosewater on their face. Rosewater from "the cup" refers to wine, brought by the young wine-bearer (the saki) which wakes one from unawareness and ignorance. A Westerner may think of the Grail legend, an image discussed in relation to Khidr in the section on parallel myths. The companions who lost their heads and turbans may be a reference to al-Hallaj, the Sufi mystic who was martyred in 805 CE (309 AH). (Hafiz, 1995, p. 161).

Corbin and the Orientalists

What is known of Khidr in the West is limited. A book known to scholars and those interested in the mystical arts of Islam is Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn'Arabi (Corbin, 1958/1969). The complex and esoteric writings of this French orientalist and professor of Islamic religion at the Sorbonne, Henri Corbin, has brought the name of Khidr, in its Persian form "Khezer," to seekers in the non-Moslem world. Corbin presents his understanding of Khidr as an initiatory spiritual master, based largely on the experiences described by the 13th Century Spanish Moslem theologian, Muhammed Ibn 'Arabi. Corbin's influence on Western views of Islam and Moslem esoteric knowledge of the spirit was furthered through his participation in the Eranos conferences of the 1930s, and his scholarly publications on the subject.

Corbin's thought is deeply mystical, reflective of Ibn 'Arabi's writings at the time of the most highly evolved state of Islamic civilization. The language, imagery, and concepts of another perception of reality based on the Sufi experience are at times richly imaginative, exciting, obscure, confusing, ambiguous, and frustrating, not unlike an encounter with Khidr. Corbin's path of knowing Khidr is a hermeneutic as well as a metaphor for entering into the Mundis Imaginalis. Corbin's involvement with the Sufi's spiritual path required and engendered a passionate and open attitude.

"Who is Khidr?" is the precisely the question asked by Corbin. His answer to this question comes from the sources of the Qur'an, the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi, and Suhrawardi, as well as Massignon's study, "Elie et son role transhistorique, Khadirya en Islam." Khidr is the invisible spiritual master, reserved for those who are called to a direct unmediated relationship with the divine world" (Corbin, 1958/1969, p. 55). If one has Khidr as a spiritual guide as Ibn 'Arabi did, one becomes a disciple invested

with a “transcendent, ‘transhistorical’ dimension” (p. 54). Ibn ‘Arabi tells of making a pilgrimage to the shrine of Rota, by the sea. He and a companion were walking along the coast. His companion was one who denied the reality of miracles performed by the righteous.

On the way we stopped at a ruined mosque to perform the noon prayer. As we went in there arrived a company of those who seclude themselves from men, who were also intending to perform the prayer. Among them was the man who had spoken to me on the sea and whom I had been told was al-Khidr. Among them also was a man of great worth whom I had met and befriended. I rose to greet him and we prayed together. After the prayer... the man whom I have said was al-Khidr took a mat from the *mihrab* (the niche in the mosque wall which indicates the direction of the Ka’abah at Mecca) of the mosque, and stretched it out in the air seven cubits from the ground and stood on it to perform his super-rogatory prayers. I pointed his actions out to my companion who told me to ask him about it. I left him and when he had finished his prayers, asked him about his action...he said he had only done it for the benefit of my companion. (Austin, 1988, p. 29)

The journey of the two along the coast, the difference in their attitudes toward faith, the time of “the middle” of the day, the ruined mosque like the crumbling wall, are suggestive of the journey of Khidr and Moses. Ibn ‘Arabi’s writing of this event in his *Futuhat*, indicates that this was real yet strange and personally significant to him. One may infer the cumulative transformative effect these extraordinary experiences were having on the Sufi master. In the last century, explanation of the meaning of Ibn ‘Arabi’s theology and his spiritual relationship to Khidr has been made accessible through the works of Henri Corbin.

There seems to be a general consensus that Ibn ‘Arabi received his initiation to the mystic path from Khidr. Addas (1989/1993), however, proposes quite another understanding of Ibn ‘Arabi’s spiritual guide. He says, “Corbin missed the significance” of a prior relationship, when he insisted on making Khadir the initiator of Ibn ‘Arabi (p. 39). It was in the presence of Jesus (known in Islam as the prophet

'Isa), his first 'real teacher', that Ibn 'Arabi underwent conversion (tawba). Addas informs us that the intervention of Khadir was certainly very real. However, it occurred much later and was considerably less decisive. This interpretation of Corbin's seems to me to say less about Ibn 'Arabi than about Corbin's personal interest in and perception of Khidr. The impact of the spiritual meeting is powerful whether with Khidr or Jesus; it is clearly a numinous, revelatory, and very personal experience.

According to Sufi belief, Moses' guide in the Qur'an is none other than the Khidr of mystical initiation. Khidr initiates Moses into "the science of predestination" (Corbin, 1958/1969, p. 55) seemingly a reference to Khidr's higher wisdom that allows him to know that when guided by God, good results would follow from certain actions taken in the present, no matter how outrageous the actions may seem. Corbin asks if Khidr figures as an archetype, according to the definition established by analytical psychology? Or, he continues, is Khidr a distinct and enduring personality? The questions Corbin raises are the concern of this dissertation.

The answers provided by Corbin are helpful to us, because he has an understanding of archetypal psychology. He wonders if we are dealing with an archetype or a real person. This is sensitive territory, and one does well to tread cautiously. I have struggled consciously tried to avoid calling Khidr an archetype for the purpose of keeping his characterization Islamic. This effort proves difficult when discussing the depth psychological of the experience of a Khidr encounter. Corbin describes the situation:

If, taking the standpoint of analytical psychology, we speak of Khidr as an archetype, he will seem to lose his reality and become a figment of the imagination, if not the intellect. And if we speak of him as a real person, we

shall no longer be able to characterize the difference in structure between Khidr's relationship with his disciple and the relationship that any other shaikh on this earth can have with his. (p. 59)

Our desire in this work is to unmask and differentiate Khidr to allow his presence as imaginal, archetypal, real or unreal to pervade our thinking enough so that the doors to his wisdom can flow in and show a new way of knowing, for that is his function. An either-or answer, the answers that he is an archetype or he is not an archetype are "not adequate to the phenomenon of Khidr's person" (Corbin, 1958/1969, p. 59).

Corbin asks another extremely interesting and pertinent question: "To what act of self-awareness does the fact of recognizing oneself to be the disciple of Khidr correspond?" (1958/1969, p. 59). A different way of phrasing that might be, at what point did Moses realize that he had encountered Khidr, desperately wanted to follow Khidr, and was finally actually accepted (with some conditions) as a companion traveler in order to learn some of Khidr's knowledge. Some shift in thinking as well as a reversal of his original direction has occurred. Moses' recognition that he had overshot his goal. He had missed the place where the fish came to life, and experienced a shock, a setback, a failure, and a letdown. Was it in the depths of fatigue and depression and, as Jung suggests an abbaissement du niveau mental, the nigredo, that the act of self-awareness occurs? Is this the shift identified by Corbin as what is needed to recognize oneself as the disciple of Khidr? These questions pertain to entering a liminal state and a type of psychological transformation in that state that occurs in conjunction with an encounter of a Khidr figure. The concept of shock and an altered state of consciousness are found in the Sufi master's technique of using a sort of suggestive wordplay to define their teachings. These words may have been used

as a sort of ko'an, a paradox meant to shock the hearer, to kindle discussion, to perplex the logical faculties, and thus engender a non-logical understanding of the real meaning of the word concerned. The resolution of apparent contradictions in some of these sayings might be found, then in an act of illumination. (Schimmel, 1975, pp. 12-13)

Corbin brings depth to the issue of the two ways, those of Moses and of Khidr. This reveals a perceptual split, an Islamic slant of dualism that echoes the depth psychologists' dilemma with Cartesian dualism. Khidr, the spiritual, is superior to Moses the rational. Corbin informs us that Khidr is the repository of an inspired, divine science, a secret, mystic truth (haqiqa), superior to the law (shari'a) (p. 55).

The belief that Khidr is regarded as a personal guide goes counter to orthodox dogma. Corbin's thought comes from Ibn 'Arabi who follows the tradition of Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980-1037 CE) regarding angels. Later, during the lifetime of Ibn 'Arabi, another theologian, Averros (1126-1198) pointed out that a doctrine of personal revelation through angels threatened orthodox authority (Haule, 1990, p. 214). The suppression of personal experience with the numinous thus took hold in Islam, mirroring theological trends in Christianity with the Holy Spirit and Judaism with the Kabbalah.

In Mundis Imaginalis (1972), Corbin tells Suhrawardhi's story of The Crimson Archangel to help the reader enter into the imaginal world as a place of liminal time, strange events, creativity, and transformation. This story written during the height of the golden age of Islam by a young Persian sheikh tells of an encounter with Khidr that occurs beyond Mt Khaf, and offers the possibility of transformation, so that you can become like Khidr.

Mount Khaf, explains Corbin, is a cosmic mountain in the topographical center of the mundis imaginalis. The cosmology this place, built up of celestial

spheres, all enveloping one another is reminiscent of the cosmology of Plotinus.

“However far you may journey, you will always come back to the point of departure” (1972, p. 3). The timeless place where Khidr is met has a circular dimension not unlike like the process of alchemy represented by the uroboros or the special place described so eloquently by T.S. Eliot:

And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time,
Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning. (1971, p. 59)

The shift in consciousness, which is bound up in the encounter with Khidr, occurs within this liminal space. “In the meantime, a very important event will have changed everything” (Corbin, 1972, p. 3). One experiences the self as a higher self, a “Thou,” beyond Mount Khaf. To realize this, the traveler one must bathe, like Khidr, in the Spring of Life (p. 3).

The theology of Ibn ‘Arabi is extremely complex and beyond the scope of this dissertation. What is important for further insight into the Khidr myth is his understanding of the mystic seeker’s perception of the place and time of meeting Khidr and the nature of that transformative topography. The immediately preceding short tale serves to illustrate Corbin’s concept of the mundis imaginalis, a place and time where what we discount as unreal and only imagination is real

Khidr is the Hidden Imam, the personal guardian angel. He is experienced in “visitations” at moments of “Qiyamat,” the unceasing unveiling which “by definition stands at a slant to time, ‘outside’ all moments” (Wilson, 1988, p. 59). In the words of the mystic, Ibn ‘Arabi, “This is the vision of God in things, which some say is greater than the vision of things in God” (quoted in Wilson, p. 59). Wilson offers,

“This vision can either be imaginal (such as a vision of Khezr, or of the Qiyamat, or of an angel) or it can be actual, as in the ‘Zen’ perception of the immediacy of a cup of tea or a flower” (Wilson, p. 61). The soul on the quest comes to “the land of Hyperborea, ruled by Khezr”; and the island of emerald, the green stone upon which where the Imam awaits his time, the personal moment of awakening into reality, of rebirth in the knowledge of self (p. 64).

Islam teaches that creation emanates in layers of reality, enveloping one another, thus creating successive levels of knowing. Like the celestial spheres of the cosmic mountain, this pattern is inherent in the art and architecture of Islam. One sees it in the multiple graduated arches of doorways and ceilings such as in the great Hagia Sophia of Istanbul. Readers familiar with the Jewish mystical tradition of the Kabbalah and the many layers spheres of the tree of life will note the similarity to Corbin’s exposition of Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought and the mundis imaginalis. There is a historical connection between the Sufis and Kabbalists, in itself a fascinating topic, but diverges too much to elaborate on here.

What does it mean to be a disciple of Khidr? Corbin’s phenomenological approach poses this question. What is the experience of the relationship? It is the experience of Khidr’s presence that is felt, and that experience transforms itself into an archetype (1958/1969, p. 60). The relationship implies that Khidr be experienced simultaneously as a person and as an archetype. This duality of nature is the strange, other way of knowing that I have referred to. It is not surprising to hear of the simultaneous double nature of Khidr for he is described by Ibn ‘Arabi and those who know him as capable of being in several places at once. Great sages, saints, and holy men throughout time have been reported as seen simultaneously in distant places where they were. St. Anthony of the Desert was one such who was known for his

reported ability to visit sick people without leaving his hermit's hut. This does not imply that Khidr is not real, but suggests that his presence may be encountered on a psychological bridge between concrete reality and the unconscious realm of archetypal forms.

Summary

Khidr is a mysterious figure who is encountered in the spiritual desert. His story is well known in the Middle East and beloved to Moslems, who hear the tale read from Sura 18 every Friday in the mosque. The Qur'an suggests that the character of Khidr is that of a surprising, enigmatic, unknowable teacher associated with the color green, divine wisdom, and immortality. Khidr's importance is further explored by turning to the Sufi mystics who believe him to be a personal, spiritual guide. Images of Khidr's eternal, transformative aspects are found in Sufi poetry. The theology of Ibn 'Arabi as understood by Corbin brings the topic into discussion of archetypes and psychology. The next chapter will take into consideration certain figures from non-Islamic sources that act in a manner similar to Khidr.

Chapter 4 Non-Islamic Sources

Khidr in Judaism

Khidr and the Prophet Elijah. A figure closely paralleling Khidr as a wali (Arabic, literally “friend of God”= wali Allah), is the Prophet Elijah as he appears in scripture, postbiblical folklore, and Kabbalistic legends. The final section of this chapter will provide an overview of several myths from the Middle East and Europe, containing themes and figures echoing the Khidr story. By that point the stranger from the mysterious Orient may not seem so unfamiliar.

Characteristics of Khidr’s enigmatic personality and the myth of his journey with Moses may be easily identified in other cultures, religions, and time periods, enabling us to begin using the term “archetypal.” In fact, Khidr not only appears in pre-Islamic myths, possibly sources of the story in Sura 18, but his counterpart’s face is seen by the attentive eye throughout the Middle East and Europe. At one time or another, the Qur’anic “servant of God” has been linked with the Glaukos myth, Melchizedek, Seth, Enoch, Jonah, Jeremiah, Lot, and the Messiah (Friedlaender, 1915).

Khidr is identified with the Prophet Elijah, St. George, and Jesus. Farther west, aspects of Khidr appear in Goethe’s Faust as Mephistopheles, in the Teutonic legend of Gruenbutel, “Green Hat, the Wild Huntsman, in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and in a German tale of a figure called “Chidher Green.” It is even suggested that Khidr emerges from the unconscious in a similar but unrelated figure on another continent, that of the Raven of the Native Americans, the Trickster figure known

universally for his unexpected actions which turn reality upside-down and create reversals for the over-confident ego (Wilson, 1991).

Based on what my research has indicated, and in keeping with Jung's treatment of Khidr as a rebirth archetype (1959/1970), it does not behoove the focus of this dissertation to develop an analysis of the incidental Trickster characteristics of Khidr. My method will be to return repeatedly to the initial image, as in dream interpretation, here the image of the purely Islamic character of Qur'anic revelation as revealed to Mohammed by the archangel Gabriel.

The closest parallel to Khidr, the Prophet Elijah (called Elias in Arabic or Ilyas in Graeco-Syrian form, or Mar Elias by the Christians). The Moslem world's portrayal of Elijah in lore and art draws on biblical sources. "It is impossible to explain why Khidr and Elijah are sometimes associated with one another" states Corbin (1958/1969, p. 57). He sees, via Ibn 'Arabi, "the person of Khidr-Elijah as initiator of the mystic truth which emancipates one from literal religion" (p. 57). Corbin's presentation of the theology of the visionary and Sufi mystic, Ibn 'Arabi underscores Khidr's interaction and identification with the Prophet Elijah.

In the branch of Islam known as Shi'ism, it is believed that "Moses' meeting with Elijah-Khidr as his initiand in the eighteenth Sura has as its counterpart the colloquy between Moses and Elijah on Mount Tabor" at the Transfiguration, the metamorphosis of Christ (Corbin, 1958/1969, p. 58). "A religious phenomenon is a primordial, original datum (like the perception of a color or a sound) which cannot be 'explained' by a causal derivation from something else" (p. 57).

A most unusual image of Elijah, from a Christian or Jewish point of view, is that of the Hebrew prophet in an alliance with another of the immortal sages, so that the two form the archetypal Pair of Friends (von Franz, 1997). In one area of Turkey,

Khidr and Elijah are remembered as two brothers, sometimes even as twins. Another legend declares that they are lovers, with Khidr as the young man and Elijah as a maiden (Mayet, 1994, p. 10). At times the separation between the two becomes a semi-permeable membrane, distinction blurs, and they become interchangeable, two who are one. This interesting pairing will configure itself again later in the discussion of alchemy and the polar opposites within the Khidr myth.

Khidr and Elijah share the same saint's feast day in popular worship, a date in early spring, (alternately given as April 23 or May 5). Sites sacred to one commonly become places of worship for the other. This is true throughout the Middle East in churches, mosques, synagogues, and ancient places, where worship of Khidr, Elijah, St. George and vestiges of the shrine of Ba'al are still in evidence. In Israel today, one may visit Mount Carmel in Haifa, where there is a Christian Carmelite monastery as well as a cave of popular worship of Elijah, prayers said in Khidr's name, on-going Druse religious practices, and the mother church of the Ba'hia Faith (Austinovic, 1972/1972). Mt. Carmel is called by the Palestinian Arabs Jabal Mar Elias (Haddad, 1969, p. 33). The mountain had long been a numinous place as the seat of the Canaanites deities Ba'al and Astarte. The fact that it was chosen as the site for the first convent in the 12th century, is an example of how an activated archetype gives birth to new forms of assimilation (Jung, 1937/1953). The union of physical space and the encounter of numinous immortals are an important aspect of the Khidr myth for this discussion. The place where Moses meet Khidr is a point in time and space that corresponds to an opening, a gateway to another way of perceiving reality.

Elijah in scripture. What do we know about Elijah? He is familiar to many of us from scripture. Folktales of his appearances abound. Bible scholars agree that Elijah was a historical person who lived about 950-850 BCE and that the biblical

account of him, the Book of Kings, generally, was composed or edited about 100-150 years later (Wiener, 1978, p. 1). This information comes from Aharon Wiener, a student of the Jungian author Erich Neumann. Wiener's detailed study entitled Elijah the Prophet in the Development of Judaism: a depth-psychological study (1978) provides some intriguing insights into the Elijah story and into Khidr as a parallel figure to Elijah.

Elijah's Hebrew name, Eliyahu, consists of five letters (alef, lamed, yod, he, vav) which are the five letters of the two names of God. The literal translation of Elijah's name is "My God is YHVH," which gives the name a personal and religious character. He was no minor prophet, for he brought down fire and rain and revived a dead man, linking him with rebirth myths. When Elijah ran away from the threats of Jezebel, he took off to the desert, the open realm where strange encounters may happen. There, ravens fed him. The raven is the symbol of the Trickster for Native Americans, an otherworld guide and initiator of balance and reversal.

The Elijah of scripture is incredibly self-assured. His first appearance in the Bible is in keeping with the example Khidr sets of appearing out of nowhere to speak enigmatic words. The Hebrew prophet suddenly is on the scene, unannounced, appearing boldly before King Ahab. After making a terrible prediction of no rain for years to come, Elijah flees into the desert. "Sudden entrances and disappearances of this sort are peculiar to Elijah" (Wiener, 1978, p. 6).

Elijah, like Khidr, "wanders from place to place," appearing suddenly "here and now" when a divine call commands him or when he believes of his own accord that he must represent God and act on his behalf (Wiener, 1978, p. 6). His simplicity, naturalness, and spontaneity, we might note, are in sharp contrast to the polished manners of the royal house, a contrast paralleling the duo of Moses the rational

lawgiver and Khidr as circular knowing and intuition. Elijah acts as if representing himself as God's emissary, and not a human being subject of divine will. The prophet's pride increases when he, in the name of the god of Israel, successfully causes the rains to come down on Mt. Carmel, extinguishing the altar fires of the priests of Ba'al. The beginning of paradox in the presence of Elijah begins with the Ba'al priests having to yield their reality to Elijah's actions and the Other.

Elijah is caught in hubris. He is possessed by the one-sidedness that Moses represents in Sura 18. Jezebel's threats resound and we see Elijah's previous absolute self-certainty and self-confidence transformed as he flees south to Beersheva. The bird, a symbol of spirit, and the color black (nigredo) may refer to Elijah's depression and condition of spiritual crisis. The raven is a symbol of the Trickster in Native American legend, but he is also the Creator in Inupiat and Yupik Eskimo tales. Raven is wise, capable of creating and destroying. Black and canny, Raven recalls the black poodle that heralds the presence of Mephistopheles in Goethe's Faust, and the dog who is said to have guarded the Seven Sleepers during their 309 years in the cave.

Elijah hid in a cave, reminiscent of Sura 18, "The Cave," and the cave of the Seven Sleepers. In the darkness of the cave, Elijah heard the "still small voice of silence" of God. The translation of the Hebrew words, "kol demamah dakkah" are usually taken to mean "quiet voice." A strong wind, an earthquake, fire, the inescapable forces of nature at God's command appear as precursors to the revelation of the "small voice of silence." The ambiguous, natural phenomena witnessed by Elijah from the cave echo the terrible, but divinely ordained events of Khidr's doing witnessed by Moses. When the Divine reveals itself to Elijah in the voice of silence, he is profoundly moved by it. Without words, the silence speaks to him. Khidr's

silence is the lesson that Moses is to listen to for the knowledge he so fervently desires.

Silence is in itself an altered state, an opening for unconscious and numinous contents. Massignon's (1955) article on Elijah points out the significance of silence in the Shi'ite devotion around Khidr-Elijah. Religious sermons end with a reference to the Virgin Mary and the "son of the maiden" or "mute son," because of his silence, like that of Miriam in the temple at the Mihrab of Zachariah before she conceived Jesus. The "silent son" is significant, "car c'est dans le silence que l'ame purifiée et vouée concevoir la Parole, et s'en nourrir," "because it is in silence that the devout and pure soul can perceive the Divine Word and be nourished by it" (p.147).

A possible meaning of the theophany at Elijah's cave on Mount Horeb, in I Kings 19:5-8, is that it "indicates to Elijah that in God all opposites are united, that his various manifestations, often incomprehensible and terrifying, have to be accepted" (Wiener, 1978, p. 175). Wiener goes further in stating that "the literal translation of the text, 'small voice of silence,' expresses as a coincidentia oppositorum and the mysterium tremendum et fascinans of Elijah's theophany"(p. 14). This concept comes from the alchemical metaphor of Jung's analytical psychology. The voice of silence is a paradox. Paradox produces the altered state experienced in an encounter with the numinous, the divine, or an archetypal form such as Khidr or Elijah.

Elijah does not die, but is taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot. Before he departs, he performs the act of passing his mantle and spiritual powers on to his disciple, Elisha, whom he had met on the road to Damascus. Elisha was an urban man, the opposite of his journey's companion and mentor, the wilderness prophet Elijah. The encounter while travelling, the passing on of the immortal's spiritual

mantle recalls Moses encounter with Khidr on the journey, and passing on the kirqua of the spiritual path known in the Sufi order.

Elijah in Legend. For those interested in legends and Judaica, a rich corpus of European Jewish folklore is available. Scholars such as Martin Buber have compiled anthologies containing accounts of rabbis such as the Ba'al Shem Tov, founder of the Chassidim, being guided spiritually by Elijah. He was a real historical figure, whose fame as a biblical prophet grew legendary.

Elijah is very seldom a seer or a fortuneteller in the literal sense and usage of the term, always acts by himself. He does not invoke divine help, he does not pray, and he behaves in a strange, unique, individual way (Schramm, 1991, p. xv). He is particularly to be met with on the road and in deserted places. Just as solitary Sufis are guided along the spiritual path by Khidr, some even inspired by the immortal one to write books and mystical doctrines, so also does Elijah come in dreams and visions to guide. He comes to encourage the discouraged and depressed, as in the story of with Rabbi Akiba. A simple, uneducated man, Akiba desired at age 40 to learn Torah. It was a struggle, and at one point he felt it was too difficult. That night, an old beggar came to the door. Akiba had little food or money but he gave what he could. When the beggar left, Akiba's wife exclaimed, "Do you know who that was? It was the Prophet Elijah! All will be well." Akiba realized she was right, and he went on to become one of Judaism's greatest Rabbis and Torah scholars.

Frequently Elijah, like Khidr, appears and then vanishes without revealing his true identity. The main character in a story usually realizes who he is after the miracle occurs. This feeling is especially identified with the moment Moses realizes that the fish that came to life was his helper, showing him his goal, but he did not know it until the miracle had already occurred and the fish was gone. At other times, Elijah

introduces himself without having a disguised appearance, in the manner that Khidr appears to Moses in Sura 18. When Elijah does appear in the guise of an ordinary person, then reveals who he really is, it is a special moment of knowing, “an experience of giluy Eliyahu, which means “Elijah revealing himself” or “Elijah’s revelation”(Schramm, 1991, p. xxv).

As noted earlier, Khidr is identified with the prophet Elijah in traditional Islam. The nature of that connection informs our understanding of the mythologem of Khidr. The Qur’anic commentaries speak of the two immortal ones as Khidr-Elias, a connection which according to Friedlaender is older than Islam (1913b, p. 694). Austinovic informs us that the biblical Elijah is not the prototype on which the Khidr myth has been built. Rather, as we shall see later on, Khidr has his origin in the Babylonian legends through the oriental romance of Alexander the Great. The tale of the fabled leader’s the journey to the fountain of life with Khidr. After the passage of time the tale came into contact with different cultures and in this way Elijah enters the myth (Austinovic, 1972/1972, p. 10).

The Talmudic story of Elijah and Rabbi ben Levi predates the Qur’an, yet there is influence on Jewish thought from the Islamic teachings as well. It is generally accepted that this Jewish tale is one of the sources for the narration in Sura 18 (Friedlaender, 1915). However other sources suggest that there is a good possibility of cross-fertilization between the Arabic and Jewish cultures over the years and this myth is serves to illustrate that phenomenon (Krauss, 1912). Krauss, writing in 1912, when so much interest in the Middle East and in Khidr was stirring, rather happily describes having before him an ancient, freshly unearthed Persian Midrash, a Judaic story of Moses’ encounter with a deceitful old man. Similarities to the story of Khidr in the Qur’an and this Midrash are found in Krauss’ translation and

commentary. Within a year, a rebuttal to Krauss appears, correcting the latter's dating of the earliest Khidr myth as 1492 CE. In this rebuttal, Friedlaender(1913b) provides yet another source for the Khidr myth, this time from a Persian Arabic writer named Kazwini (died 1283 CE) who had drawn on still older sources. The dark side of Khidr/Elijah is found in the Jewish haggadic tale of Ashmedai, the arch-demon, who wanders with Beniah ben Jehoiada (Krauss, 1912, p. 3). Based on more recent research, it would appear that the Jewish connection with Khidr is ancient, far older than the Kazwini document, and draws and returns into Jewish haggadic literature as well as Babylonian myth.

A story from Jewish folklore about the Kabbalist, Hayim Vital, points to the archetypal nature of the figure (Schwartz, 1993). The story tells of an underworld encounter with Elijah as a knowing psychopomp, characterized much as in like Jung's description of the prophet in his own encounter in the unconscious (1961, pp. 181-182). Elijah appears in the space between the conscious and the unconscious as a psychagogue; a guide of the soul through the underworld just as Virgil is to Dante in The Divine Comedy (trans.1993).

The Rabbi in the City of the Dead. At midnight, the voice of the wind awoke Rabbi Hayim Vital, in Safed, the holy city of the Jewish mystics and Kabbalists. He was certain that it was calling him. He let the wind lead him to a crossroads. Here the word "wind" signals that something strange is occurring; this rabbi, a respected scholar and student of mystic doctrine thus a seeker of truth and the secrets of life, is drawn out of sleep, an unconscious state, by the wind. In Hebrew, the word for wind, ruach, also means spirit. The rabbi is between two worlds, two days, between sleep and waking, in the middle of the night, at a time of liminality, at "the dead of night" to

go to a very special place in stories of liminal encounters, a crossroads. The place is called “the city of the dead.”

Hayim Vital meets three figures, his father and two rabbis, all holy men who had died. “Vital looked around in confusion. Somehow he had entered the Kingdom of the Dead. He wondered if in this way he had passed from one life into another without noticing”(Schwartz, 1993a, p. 10). In the liminal state, boundaries are blurred and confusion creates vulnerability to an experience of unconscious contents, to alternative realities. Vital then saw and heard “an old man travelling alone, a hermit with long hair singing about the coming days of the Messiah” (p. 10). This is Elijah’s role in traditional Judaism, to herald the coming of the Messiah. “No one else could hear the singing, or see the old man. When the old man and Hayim Vital passed each other, the sun began to shine, even though it was many hours until dawn” (p. 10).

Vital is having auditory hallucinations, loss of sense of time and place, and yet there is light, consciousness in a period when he would expect darkness. A breakthrough of the threshold of consciousness into the unconscious seems to have occurred. Vital turns around to watch the old man as he departs, but the figure has already disappeared. When he turns back, the others were also gone. He is alone at the crossroads of the city, where he had first arrived. That is when he woke up” (Schwartz, 1993a, p. 10).

Howard Schwartz, who has written extensive anthologies of Jewish folklore, takes this story from the Jewish legends of 16th century Palestine (1993b, pp.101-102). There is a further connection of this tale to the mystical appearance of Elijah. The mentor of Hayim Vital, was Rabbi Isaac Luria of the 16th century mystical center of Safed. Luria “The Holy Ari” (Hebrew for “Lion”) as Luria is fondly

called, is said to have received the secret doctrine of Kabbalah in nightly visitations from Elijah.

Inner encounter and the body. Two images repeatedly occur to me during the preparation of this work. One is a scene of a man praying in an unusual position. He is crouched on the ground with his head placed between his knees. The second image is again of the rain, a heavy, windless, warm rain, which falls steadily. In Chapter 3 we saw that the rain is tied to the myth of Khidr, as bringer of the rain and alchemical symbol of the transformative rain. The biblical Elijah is also known for his power to bring or cease the rain.

The first image, of the crouching man, struck me several years ago, while reading a book by Chaim Potok, author of **The Chosen** (1967) and **The Promise** (1969). The scene that came to haunt and fascinate me, for no particular reason that I could discern, was in **The Book of Lights** (1981). This is a novel about the atom bomb in World War II, the light of the Divine in the Kabbalah, and an Orthodox Jewish boy, Gershon, who has a strange experience on the flat rooftop of his New York apartment building. Reality shifted for him in that moment. He knew he saw and felt something powerful, but was not sure what. His studies to become a rabbi involve Kabbalah, an esoteric mystical theology that his roommate ridicules as an unworldly waste of time. The father of his secretive, melancholy college roommate, Arthur, is a physicist involved with the creation of the atomic bomb. World War II ensues, and Gershon becomes a chaplain in Korea, where he has ample time to think. An old mentor, Professor Keter, of his Kabbalah studies appears in a dream, leading Gershon to ponder the meaning of good and evil. When the war ends, Gershon visits Arthur's parents to console them, or maybe himself, about the death of his former roommate. Gershon is shocked by the realization that the father was instrumental in

the fate of Hiroshima and the atomic reaction's equally powerful capability of producing light, light which emanates from the Creator, in Kabbalah a manifestation of wisdom and life.

The bomb darkens Gershon's thoughts, and he returns to his childhood rooftop. There he crouches, alone above the darkened city, curling up until his head is between his knees. A scene then occurs evoking a strange Talmudic story from his final oral exam with Professor Keter, the story of Rabbi Dordia. The vision then encroaching upon Gershon's reality is one of otherworldly encounter with powerful forces and a voice which only he can hear, a voice of wisdom, good, and evil. This scene seemed oddly familiar to me. In time I was to see it in other contexts that will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The ancient Hebrew tract, Avodat Zarah 17b, which was the topic of Gershon's final oral examination, is as follows. An infamous Rabbi Dordia is proud, successful, and prosperous. He is known for his insatiable appetite for women. He encounters a prostitute who sees his inflated ego and calls him in it. This causes him disillusionment with life and disgust with his self-interest. Fearing for his soul, the rabbi pleads for the hills and the sun and the moon to grant him mercy. They all reply that they need all the mercy they have for themselves. In despair, Dordia puts his head between his knees and weeps. The heavens then are heard saying that the soul of Rabbi Dordia will live forever.

There are some similar aspects of this story to the Khidr myth of this study. Rabbi Dordia has an inflated ego at the outset and is thrown into a reversal. The shift in his consciousness is brought about by an encounter with another incarnate being, a prostitute who certainly is a marginal, liminal sort of person in society. The three requests, all denied, that Dordia makes for help from the sun, the moon, and the stars

echo the three disconcerting acts of Khidr. The statement that Dordia's soul will achieve immortality hints again of the Khidr myth.

These similarities are interesting, but they are not as compelling as the strange image of the man with his head between his knees. The importance of the body position for some shift of awareness becomes evident in a text on Kabbalah of the Merkabah school. Merkabah is Hebrew for chariot, as in the epiphany of Elijah when a chariot of fire carried him to heaven. In the practice of this esoteric school of Jewish mysticism, in order to reach a higher level of spiritual consciousness, the mystic is taught to "place the head between the knees" as he prays, thus making an ascent to the Divine (Himmelfarb, 1995, p. 128).

In another esoteric spiritual discipline, alchemy, this image is evoked by an illustration from a manual of the Middle Ages. In this picture a man, an adept of alchemy, is portrayed seated on the ground with his knees drawn up. The adept, a bearded figure in long robes, is in a sort of crevasse or valley, perhaps two hills, and the sun and moon are on either side of him. The caption tells us that this is "an alchemist meditating in the nigredo state, corresponding psychologically to the self-reflection induced by conflict and depression" (von Franz, 1959/1980, p. 223). The image corresponds to the dark confusion of our Moses in his meeting with Khidr.

A chance finding in a library, aided by an aged wise man at the reception desk, provides another interesting depiction of the image. In this translation of the story of Gilgamesh, an ancient source of the Khidr myth, there is a fascinating image of the hero in the nigredo. Gilgamesh, torn with grief after the death of his friend Enkidu, journeys to find the secret of immortality. Finally he finds the plant that when eaten, will bestow eternal life, falls asleep, and loses it to a hungry serpent. In that moment, Gilgamesh realizes that he cannot avoid death and emotional suffering. Then

The mountain brought a dream,
 Did it for him.
 A cold wind passed
 And made him lie down...
 ...And like the grain of the mountain
 Gilgamesh drew his legs to his chin.
 Sleep overcame him, rest of mankind.
 I saw a third dream
 The dream I saw was in every way frightening.
 The heavens cried out; earth roared.
 Daylight vanished and darkness issued forth.
 Lightning flashed, fire broke out,
 Clouds swelled; it rained death. (Gardiner & Miller, 1984, p. 140)

The image of taking a fetal position to encourage inner focus, of darkness and meditation, and of dream-state and vision from the unconscious recapitulate the alchemical and Jewish mystical themes. Elijah assumed this position while awaiting the rain, "he squats down, puts his head on his knees in humble expectation, and sends his servant out seven times, until he sees a rain cloud rising from the sea" (Wiener, 1978, p. 13). Interestingly, the image of the rain appears again in the middle of the transformative state, for Gilgamesh associated with death, a prerequisite for new life.

Where I am going with all of this is to illustrate an image related to the Khidr story that hints at subtle shades of esoteric teachings in the archetypal layers of the myth. His will be further developed through examination of the scriptural story of Elijah and the subsequent discussion of alchemy, a sacred science developed in Islamic lands ("al-kham" is Arabic for "the black"). Elijah is summoned by King Ahab to show whose god is stronger, the God of the prophets of Ba'al and Astarte (Anath), or the god of Israel. Elijah rises to the task and meets the challenge in a contest of divine powers. The issue at hand is the lack of rain and drying up of vegetation in the land. In mythological cults of that ancient Middle East, an annual

renewal ritual would be performed to restore rain, fertility, and life to the earth. The fertility god must be enticed to return from the underworld to the female deity. We might note that alchemical images of fire, solutio, aqua permanens (water), the nigredo (the dark underworld and dryness), and the coniunctio (the return of the fertility god to his lover Astarte) are suggested.

Again we encounter the rain and the body position of the ancient, dark meditation. After the miracle on Mount Carmel of the God of Israel's fire (symbol of the sun god and the rebirth cycle) descending upon the altar, the prophet orders the defeated priests of Ba'al to be killed. In this last action the victorious Elijah exceeded his competence as prophet (R. Isaac Arama [c. 1450 CE], quoted in Wiener, 1978, p.12). "Elijah then expects the rain to set in at once. He can already hear its murmur. He squats down, puts his head on his knees in humble expectation and sends his servant out seven times until he sees a rain cloud rising from the sea. Then when the downpour starts, he becomes ecstatic"(pp. 12-13).

This image of a humble Elijah with his head on his knees, waiting, is striking, given the victory he has just achieved at Mount Carmel. The scene occurs just before the angry Jezebel threatens Elijah for defeating her priests of Ba'al and her power. Elijah fears for his life and suspects that the people will not remain faithful to the God of Israel. He feels himself a failure and, disheartened, flees away from the ordinary world, from Israel, to the desert in neighboring Judea. Alone and in despair, he wishes for death. Elijah falls asleep, until an angel wakes him and provides cake and water for renewed life.

The fish, the water, and the angel appearing in the wilderness described in Sura 18 are suggested by this scene. The elements of fire and water are symbols of many meanings including life, purification, baptism, renewal, desire, the spirit, and

the unconscious. They are used in the alchemical process of refinement of lead into gold. Fire and water also meet in a practice in Baghdad, related to Khidr and Elijah. When a child learns to swim for the first time, the mother lights tiny lamps and puts them on pieces of wood afloat in the water. This is so Khidr-Elias will not keep the soul of the child (Massignon, 1955, p. 146). The popular belief is that Khidr-Elias himself lives in the Tigris, possibly the survival of a Chaldean water-divinity cult. Elijah has a connection to water, as does Khidr. The Shi'ites of Baghdad believe that Elijah still lives, invisible, along the Tigris River (p. 146). A devotion to Khidr-Elias is still practiced on the banks of the Tigris. One goes down to the river at sunset with three pieces of date palm leaves and arranges them in a Pythagorean triangle with lit candles. These are put lighted into the water with one's petition for cure from sickness. Massignon tells us that "during the time of cholera I have seen tiny lighted lamps floating down the Tigris in the evening" (pp. 146-147).

There is a dialogue between Moses and Khidr. According to Gadamer, understanding (if it is possible at all) is achievable only through dialogue (quoted in Kulkarni, 1997, p. 167). With Khidr dialogue, when it occurs, is always new, surprising, and transformative. Massignon says, "It is the underlying sense of the dialogue between Moses and Elijah at the foot of Mount Tabor that it is the dialogue itself which transfigures Christ" (1955, p. 148). In Sura 18, there appears another dialogue between the same two persons, Moses and an anonymous wise man, Khidr-Elijah, according to tradition (p. 142).

The use of the image of dialogue suggests that both Elijah and Khidr enter into transformative, mentoring and guiding relationships with people. The Islamic figure, however, constellates some different affective reactions. His presence seems more enigmatic, unsettling, paradoxical, and alluring. The reason for the archetypal journey

has to do with affect. There is a compelling draw to have and incorporate the qualities of knowledge and immortality of Khidr felt as intrigue, seductive appeal, Eros, and the desire for the Beloved as expressed in Sufi poetry. The prophet Elijah does not stir that type of response. Elijah is enigmatic, intriguing and wise in a patriarchal manner.

Another aspect of the difference between Elijah and Khidr comes from the fact that Elijah is entirely human, whereas Khidr has no origin in flesh. Khidr is angelic, a “friend of God” who has the ability to incarnate, at times as human. Khidr can and does interact with chosen individuals. In Chassidic tradition, Elijah is endowed with the collective soul of Israel. Every male child, when presented for the covenant with God at 8 days of age, receives part of the soul of Elijah and after attaining adult age, goes on to develop this soul. There is a special chair set aside at this bris milah, the ceremony of the covenant of circumcision, for Elijah.

In Jewish extra-scriptural literature, including the Talmud, pre-dating Islam by several centuries, a strange tale of Elijah and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi is told in almost identical form to Sura 18’s tale of Khidr and Moses’ journey (Schwartz, 1993b, and Schramm, 1991). The rabbi was on a journey when he encountered the Prophet Elijah. The two traveled together and Elijah performed four strange, even unspeakable acts. In the Qur’an, Khidr performs three such deeds. In the Jewish version there is one more which involves killing a cow.

The numerical significance of the four deeds of Elijah is worth commenting on. The number 4 is a quaternity, a number Jung interprets as indicating wholeness, balance, and completion. The even numbers recur throughout Judaism, in the two tablets of the law, the Ten Commandments, and the twelve tribes of Israel. In Islam, the odd numbers seem more prevalent. There are the 999 names of Allah, the seven

stages of mystical approach to the Divine, the Seven Sleepers, the five daily prayers, the three central sections of Sura 18. The configuration of arches in Islamic architecture, with the emanation from one central point, produces infinite odd numbers of scallops. The number 3 is a number Jung sees as static, in the process of change towards wholeness. The Khidr myth is exactly about change and the process of individuation, as we will see in the chapter on Jung's analysis of Sura 18 as a rebirth archetype.

Summary.

Elijah is probably the closest to Khidr of all the parallel figures to be examined. Both tend to make their appearances at times of crises, distress, or disorientation at a time when the threshold of consciousness is lowered, a liminal place of the middle. "Elijah and Khidr reveal themselves through a miracle just before they depart, after having put mankind or a man through some test or other" (Von Franz, 1998, p. 214). Khidr appears just after the tale of the cave of the Seven Sleepers and in the dreams of Sufi initiates. Elijah meets God only when he comes to the threshold of the cave, the place of the middle where paradox and a mind-altering theophany is witnessed. He is also met in dreams, as in the tale of Hayim Vital, at the entrance to the unconscious, and at the gates of the city. The door is left open at the Passover Seder in case he wishes to cross the threshold.

A depth psychological interpretation of the biblical character of Elijah provides a "prototype of the hero archetype" (Wiener, 1978, p. 174). The image of an ever-helpful Elijah, which also found lasting and manifold expression in a continually growing folklore centered upon him made the people aware of divine assistance in times of national crises and also especially in personal hardship and desolation.

Elijah's capacity at any time to release the individual from spiritual distress may be seen also as an indication that the collective can achieve redemption to begin with in the individual and with his help (Wiener, p. 178).

Elijah always appears at the beginning of a new spiritual or historical period. With the approach of the Christian calendar year 2000, the archetype of the threshold may become recognizable in the collective. Encounters with Khidr and Elijah as beings at the boundary of the world and time suggest myths of other threshold figures, such as the Greek god of the threshold, Hermes, the Roman Mercurius, the Green Knight, the Hindu tale of the King and the Corpse, and the goddess Hekate. The following discussion will introduce these and several other figures sharing important characteristics with Khidr.

Khidr in Cultural Myths.

We are looking at the Khidr myth as an example of an archetypal, universal pattern. If this is a valid assumption, we should be able to point to a form of Khidr in Christianity and in non-Moslem countries. There are, in fact, several myths in the Middle East and in Europe that share characteristics with Khidr, including the well-known slayer of dragons, Saint George. It has felt overwhelming to try to pull together the vast amount of material that has almost spontaneously emerged in the research on Khidr. The mythic material is endlessly interconnected. Pulling on one strand of thought, a single image in the myth, tears tangles of images from the soil of unconscious. Digging around the base of the legend reveals roots that are ancient and intertwined with other roots nourishing other living organisms. "The discoverable contents of the widely distributed images keep changing...in unceasing permutations,

as the cultural settings change throughout the world and in the course of history” (Zimmer, 1973, p. 2).

The shape-shifting, paradoxical, unpredictable, yet eternal nature of myth actually is an apt description of Khidr’s nature. I have found it necessary to present this material without more than a few analytical comments to call attention to details that might be lost to later discussion. A psychological hermeneutic is delayed until the next chapter, in order to keep the mythic process in an uncontaminated, separate container. The result of this decision is a method akin to Zimmer’s “mode of the dilettante” in which the myths are told, enjoyed, and allowed to transform as they are heard (1973, p. 2).

Gilgamesh, Alexander, and Socrates. It appears that the story in the Qur’an of Khidr and Moses draws on at least three sources: Elijah, Gilgamesh, and a legend of Alexander the Great. There are two accepted sources of the story in Sura 18. Both sources tell of a quest for the water of immortal life but only one features the pair of traveling companions, with one who becomes immortal, thus Khidr. This legend, also known as Pseudo-Callisthenes (2nd or 3rd century CE) contains a pre-Islamic figure identified with Khidr (Gibb & Kramers, 1961, pp. 232-235). In some Islamic versions of the legend it is related that, on diving into the water of immortality, Alexander’s companion became green, in colloquial Arabic al-Khidr (Sviri, 1996, p. 31). For our purpose of understanding the character of Khidr, let us look at one version of the Alexander legend. Familiar themes from Sura 18 are heard; the journey of the two companions, the confluence of the rivers, the spring of eternal life, and the quest for immortality ultimately denied to the hero.

When Alexander the Great of Macedonia set out on his journey Eastward he was focused on the thought of finding a special place, the confluence of the two

rivers between East and West. He had been a successful leader and warrior like Gilgamesh, but become disillusioned with all his conquests and achievements when he contemplated the temporary nature of every living thing. As with Moses and Gilgamesh, Alexander had but one reason for his quest, to find the spring of eternal life. A companion accompanied our hero, a cook named Andreas, the counterpart of both Joshua of Nun and Khidr in Sura 18. This we have the archetypal Pair of Friends on the Journey for the Water of Life.

He embarked on his search with his cook, Andreas. After many years of wandering they decided to part ways. Andreas, on his way, happened to take a pause for food by a river. He opened the basket where he had stored a cooked fish. A few drops of water splashed accidentally on the fish, and immediately it was revived and leaped into the water. Andreas jumped after the fish, and became inadvertently blessed-or cursed, as it was sometimes implied-with immortality.

(Sviri, 1996, p. 31)

In this way, Andreas became the immortal one of the two companions, echoing the image of the Dioscuri, the archetypal pair of one immortal, one mortal (Jung, 1939/1944). The separation of the two travelers on the journey is in keeping of the story in Qur'an, for both Moses and his servant Joshua of Nun part ways, and Moses and Khidr also go along separate paths. In one version of the Alexander legend, after the parting of ways, he servant becomes Khidr. Mason's (1986) contemporary version is based on the epic attributed to the 12th-century poet Nizami. It opens with Khidr encountering "his celebrated companion in the Land of Darkness" (p. 3).

Khidr has already drunk the Water of Life, become immortal, and is taking Alexander to the spring. In the Qur'an, it is not stated that the stranger Moses encounters is immortal, but that he has greater knowledge, from God, that Moses

desires to learn. One may conclude that the place that Moses is so earnestly seeking and the wisdom of Khidr are one and the same. Knowing “The Place” then becomes a key point in knowing who Khidr is. Perhaps as the monks of the Middle Ages believed, the desire for learning is tantamount to the desire for God, and both lead to the same waters. What is implied, then, is that the quest for the knowledge of Khidr and the quest for the fountain of life are the same. To know the Divine means being immortal and eternal life means knowing God.

Of the special place where Khidr is encountered, more may be learned by looking at another version of the Alexander legend. In the Qur’an, the place Moses seeks sought is the madjma al-bahrain, the place where the two seas meet. In the Syriac version of the legend, Alexander with his army crosses a strip of land between the eleven bright seas and the ocean. According to Western Semitic theology, this is the end of the world where the oceans of heaven and earth meet, and it may correspond to the straits of the Suez or the conjunction of East and West (Gibb & Kramers, 1961, p. 232). The Qur’an gives clear evidence of connection between Khidr and a place where dual waters come together. A version of the Iskendername, the Alexander legend, that was written by Ahmedi around 1410 CE, uses the model of the Khidr-Alexander pairing to comment on the dichotomy between political and religious history. In a recent dissertation on the Alexander legend, Khidr is described as “the immortal ‘Green Man’ whose mantic role transcends dichotomy” (Sawyer, 1997).

There is a version of this ancient legend in modern drama form written by Herbert Mason (1986), in which Khidr’s character is richly developed. In this play, there are only two actors, Khidr and Alexander the great. The dialogue spoken as the two make the journey to the place they seek shows Alexander’s struggle with defeat,

depression, ego, and narcissism. Khidr demonstrates economy of speech, in the manner of Khidr in the story with Moses. The separation between the two is one of consciousness and attitude.

The Gilgamesh Epic is most likely a source of the Khidr story. The image of the significant place of two bodies of water is again seen in connection with a quest for immortality. The place between the two seas, the rock where Khidr is encountered is relevant to the later psychological hermeneutic. This metaphor of place, of a confluence or a boundary between two seas, reveals some important particularities about Khidr and the meaning of the journey, to be considered in the discussion of liminal and transitional space.

The Gilgamesh Epic is similar but not identical to the story of Khidr and Moses. When Gilgamesh, the great hero of ancient Mesopotamia, lost his beloved friend and companion, Enkidu, to the dark realm of death, he was torn with grief and fear for his own mortality. Obsessed with finding a way to defeat death, Gilgamesh set out on a quest to learn of this knowledge. Utnapishtim, who lives at the mouth of the rivers (ina pi narati) on an island across the Sea of Death, was the keeper of the secret of immortality (Sviri, p. 30).

Alexander the Great of Macedonia, according to the legends and romances of the time, spent his life wandering the world, in the manner of Moses in Sura 18, in search of the water of life. While both Alexander and his guide, Khidr, arrived at the well or fountain, Khidr was granted the ability to actually find the water, and drank it, becoming immortal. Alexander was not granted that reward. Ibn 'Arabi refers to the legend of Alexander the Great and Khidr in his Futuhāt, giving further details.

Khidr's name is

Balya b. Mailikan...He was in an army and was sent by the commander in search of water, which they had run short of. He discovered and drank from the source of life. And so it is that he is still living now; he had no idea that God granted immortality to whoever drinks that water. I met him in Seville and he taught me to submit to spiritual masters and not contradict them. (Addas, 1993, p. 63)

The figure of the traveling companion on the quest, paralleling Moses' servant Joshua ben Nun and Alexander's cook, Andreas, is not present in Gilgamesh after the death of Enkidu. The hero must strike forth alone. Finally he reaches the island of the old man, Utnapishtim-Khasisatra. An immortal like Khidr, this wise one has found the secret of eternal life at the place of two waters, at the end of the quest. In Sura 18:64, Khidr is called "one to whom God's mercy had been shown, to whom divine wisdom had been granted, The servant of God" when he is encountered by Moses. According to translators, this almost sounds like a translation of the name Khasisatra (Gibb & Kramers, 1961, p. 232).

Von Franz's (1980) work on the psychological metaphors in alchemy provides us with yet another wonderful figure possessing many of the qualities of Khidr. She cites Apuleius' description of Socrates' genius (daimonion) as follows:

He is a private patron and individual guide an observer of what takes place in the inner person, guardian of one's welfare, he who knows one's most intimately, one's most alert and constant observer, individual judge, irrefutable and inescapable witness, who frowns on evil and exalts what is good. (p. 148)

Further, in the manner of Khidr, the daimonion shows himself to be "the one who can see to the bottom of uncertain situations, and can give warning in desperate situations, can protect us in dangerous situations and can come to our rescue when we are in need" (Von Franz, 1980, p. 148). This all may occur if one "watches him in the right way, seeks ardently to know him," indicating that the desire to know and the willingness to surrender and be led by this genius who inspired Socrates is crucial.

There are similarities to our profile of Khidr such as the coming to one's aid in his appearance in uncertain situations and danger. The daimonion may intervene in liminal states, "now through a dream and now through a sign (synchronistic event), to steady our inconstancy, to lighten our darkness, to direct what is favorable toward us and to compensate what is evil" (Von Franz, 1980, pp. 148-149). The compensatory function of Khidr is exactly this, providing a balance to the "evil" of one-sidedness and inflation of the ego Moses carries as a rational, logical, lawgiver. One difference from Khidr to note is the mention of assistance and help that the daimonion gives. There is no suggestion of this in the Islamic tales of the "Verdant One".

European and Christian Connections. In what form does Khidr appear in the Western world and to the non-Moslem who encounters this mythic figure? The common origin of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the Middle East with its attendant intertwining and convoluted emotional and political intermarriages would seem to indicate the presence of a legend of Khidr, or his counterpart in the Christian world. St. George, most commonly associated with the slaying of the dragon, has enjoyed popular worship in the Middle East in a manner not familiar to most contemporary Westerners.

Some background information on Saint George is worth repeating here for the purpose of contrast and comparison with Khidr and Elijah. One version of the saint's life tells that he was a Christian knight who lived in 3rd-century Palestine. This noble fellow saved a king's daughter, a Christian convert, from a dragon. He was a warrior and the Crusaders carried his shield of militancy as a standard of bravery. In popular imagination, St. George developed aspects of a patron of the sea, fertility, and renewal of life. St. George was martyred, like the Sufi mystic, al-Hallaj, the Egyptian Osiris, and the Greek god, Dionysius; all were tortured and dismembered.

"The Georgic saints" is Haddad's (1969) appellation for St. George, Elijah, and Khidr. Haddad informs us that the word "georgic" is derived from the Greek word georgous for "farmer, husbandman," the one closest to the land and its fertility, the common theme in a variety of religions (p. 24).

"Green George" is the name used for the patron saint of sheep, horses, vegetation, and rain in the folklore of Russian, Romanian, and Slavonic farmers. This belief may flow from earlier baalic cults, the Glaukos legend of the overweening "green fertility genius" with his horses, and the causing of rain associated with Elijah, and Khidr (p. 23). The early spring date (April 23 or May 5) of the Khizir-ilyas festival is identical with that of St. George's feast day, when it was observed before the Vatican abolished the celebration in 1965.

European folklore has a figure of its own associated with greenness and renewal, the "Green Man," described in detail in Anderson's (1990) thorough study by that name. The "Green Man" depicted in architectural embellishments on churches and sarcophagi, however, is not identical to the Islamic Khidr. The relationship is limited to the renewal /rebirth theme, and the translation of Khidr's name as "green."

In the Green Man legend there is no enigmatic spiritual guide, no personal encounter, and no journey presenting logic-challenging events to cause a shift in consciousness. It may be said that the European pagan deity known as "the Green Man" is less personally interactive with humankind than Khidr, who connects with individuals on a psychological and spiritual level. The European Green Man is more closely bound to the earth as a spirit of the plant kingdom, nature and the growth and rebirth cycle in the agrarian world, by extrapolation, also the human life cycle.

Traditional Islamic thought does not revere Khidr as a deity of the earth or as an ecological saint. Most certainly he is not regarded in the sense that Wilson (1991) suggests, when he writes, “Nowadays Khezr might be induced to reappear as the patron of modern militant environmentalism since he represents the nexus between the wilderness and the human realm” (pp. 23-24). As we have seen so far, Khidr is a murshid, a spiritual guide and a participant in a process of profound reversal of attitude.

In spite of Anderson’s (1990) doubts about the influence of the Khidr story on the Green Man legend, one may surmise that the returning Crusades carried some information about the Khidr legend when bringing back their booty and tales of the exotic Orient with its whirling Dervishes. The Arabian Nights opened Western imagination to the world of Moslem creativity and inspiration. The Book of the Thousand and One Nights popularized Middle Eastern legends in Europe with tales of wonderful, saint-like beings such as a holy wali who behaves much like Khidr. This angelic being “equalizes the seasons, re-crowns the trees with royal green, unbinds the fleeting streams, spreads out grass carpets on the meadows, and hangs his green light mantle in the evening air to color the skies after the sun has set” (Mathers, trans., 1930, vol. 4, p. 83, quoted in Haddad, 1969, p. 29). (I found this piece of information personally interesting because of a tiny but definitely Khidr-feeling coincidence. I knew that my long-deceased Aunt Peggy had received a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in the 1940s. While researching the Dissertation Abstracts for this work, I discovered that her topic was the Arabian Nights).

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. A myth from the historical collective of the European imagination features a green man of a different cut. This one, is Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, is found in the Romance cycle of the King Arthur Tales of

England. The story begins on New Year's day, just as in the opening scene of the Gilgamesh Epic, echoing the renewal and rising sun motif of the ancient Middle Eastern religions. The beginning of the year, any beginning, is the "cave," the equivalent of the womb, the belly of Brahma, from which all things are produced (Coomaraswamy, 1939/1944, p. 109).

The Green Knight, an immortal giant with unusual powers, appears unexpectedly to offer a challenge, which Gawain accepts. Gawain's ensuing hero's journey leads to a period of three tests in the Knight's castle, then three strokes of the Knight's sword, with death only avoided because of the protection of the green girdle worn by Gawain.

Coomaraswamy writes that it may be assumed that the two opponents were friends, fought, and were reconciled. That is, indeed, precisely the relationship of God to Satan-often called 'the Serpent'-as completely stated only in those traditions, notably the Islamic, in which an ultimate apokatastasis of the fallen Angel is foreseen" (1939/1944, p. 106). The parallel mystery of St. George and the Dragon also tells of opponents, "perhaps even brothers, who are mortal enemies in this world then become friends in the green room (the other world)" (p. 106).

The connection of the Khidr mythologem to the Arthurian legend of Grail Quest is called to mind. The Grail legend has many versions all telling of the Quest of Life in which emphasis is laid upon a "talismanic source of Plenty that in the Cuchulain version is a magic cauldron (Coomaraswamy, 1939/1944, p. 109). "The Buddha's begging bowl is a Grail; fed from that inexhaustible source the whole world will revive" (p. 118). Khidr of folklore and spiritual experience carries a vessel containing the water of eternal life. Khaqani alluded to the Sufis

who carry in their waterbowl the water of life, like Khidr,
and whose rods are as miraculous the rod of Moses. (Schimmel, 1975, p. 17).

Talesin/Parsifal. King Arthur was accompanied to the Otherworld by the quasi-historical figure of Talesin, the greatest of bards after his rebirth. Their quest was to capture the precious cauldron. Talesin “stood at the intersection of time and the timeless, setting the present in the context of Christian and Welsh pagan history” (Hobson, 1970, p. 20).

I have borne a banner before Alexander-
I am able to instruct the whole universe.
I shall be until the day of doom on the face of the earth;
And it is not known whether my body is flesh or fish.

The above lines from the Book of Talesin (quoted in Hobson, 1970, p. 21) describe characteristics that also identify Khidr or even the alchemical Mercurius (as the fish). These images recall Sura 18, the eternal wanderer image, immortality, the fish and the possession of higher wisdom. In addition, Alexander the Great is referred to and Lucifer may suggest Faust and Mephistopheles. Saint George, Elijah, and Khidr, the Talesin figure will be all present at the End of Time.

The medieval myth of Parsifal should also be included in any discussion of the Grail quest. In this legend, the hero is a foolish, ignorant, young man who sets off to discover the world. The archetypal mentor appears. An elderly man, Gornemant, initiates Parsifal into the practice of arms, and to courtly behavior. There are trials to teach humility and penitence. The object of the quest is the Grail. The rebirth theme in Wahner’s version of the myth is seen on Parsifal’s symbolic death when he swoons upon learning of his Mother’s death. “This mysterious symbol, which was not originally Christian but which came to be portrayed in the texts as a holy chalice leads

him at first to refuse to serve God, in order that he may accomplish his quest” (Brunel, 1992, pp. 939-940).

The Parsifal figure found in another story, Le Cornet acoustique, “is an octogenarian who rediscovers physical youth” (Brunel, 1992, p. 940). “The Grail reverts to being a pagan object; it ceases to be a sacred chalice and becomes the cup of Venus containing a regenerating liquid” (p. 941). The rebirth archetype is evident in this tale. The meeting with an otherworldly mentor/guide in a liminal place, the disorientation, waiting in unknowing, and profound shift in consciousness of the Khidr story are not found in their entirety in the Grail legends although elements, such as Merlin as wise old man/ otherworldly mentor, do occur.

The purpose of introducing this material, aside from illustrating universal themes, is to emphasize the image of the cup as the vessel of regenerative liquid, the cup of wine sung of by Sufi poets. Legends suggesting a Khidr type of presence, or at the very least an influence from contact with the Arab world, appear on the European continent as well as the British Isles. Krauss (1912) tells us that there is also a parallel to the story of Khidr and Moses’ journey in a favorite French fairy tale, “l’ange et l’ermite” which he believes “has its roots in the fantastic Orient” (p. 346).

A certain suspicious character, known as “Chidher” is described in a tale set in Amsterdam, as diaphanous, ungraspable, and always in disguise. He is guardian of magic and mysteries, a seeker and gatherer of the elect upon the earth. This description of “Chidher” is from the 1916 novel Das Gruene Gesicht by Gustave Meyrink (quoted in Faivre, 1995, p. 119), who wrote in the time when Friedlaender’s Chidherlegende was published, Jung was writing his first piece mentioning Khidr, and European interest in the mysterious East was high. Meyrink also authored

another work at the crossroads between Neo-Romanticism and Expressionism, which deserves attention.

The Golem. The story is set in the Prague ghetto at the beginning of the 20th century, and is presented as the narrator's dream (Brunel, 1992, p. 483). A Rabbi creates a homunculus, a living being created from clay, using Kabbalistic formulae and methods suggestive of alchemical procedures. The Golem is a kind of ghost. A person may come upon it unexpectedly, round a bend in the road, but as soon as it is recognized, it mysteriously vanishes or shrinks. It is linked to the fantastic topography of the ghetto (p. 484).

Meyrink was familiar with the works of Freud and Jung. Here again the Golem is a projection of the unconscious, a figure representing the Double; but unlike in the works of the Romantics, it is a Double whose ambivalence is emphasized. Sometimes it is the schizophrenic, terrifying, Other, the Adversary; sometimes a kindly, helpful being, assisting people in distress. In addition it becomes apparent that the fantastic metamorphoses of the Golem accompany or set in train an oscillating process involving the destruction and restructuring of consciousness. Meyrink's novel may be seen as an account of a process of individualization, a mental transformation whereby the hero integrates opposed images and so rediscovers his Self (1992, p. 485). The creation of a homunculus also occurs in Goethe's Faust as well as an encounter with an immortal. This is Mephistopheles, the Underworld guide who represents higher knowledge and power to the disillusioned, world-weary Dr. Faust.

The King and the Corpse. I would be remiss if I did not include the marvelous and unsettling tale from early Hindu mythology, The King and the Corpse (Zimmer, 1973). In this tale, a holy man in the robes of a beggar ascetic visits a king. Every

day for 10 years the beggar gives the king a piece of fruit that the king stores away. One day a monkey grabs the fruit, bites into it, and a jewel falls out. The king realizes what hidden treasures he has been given and calls for the holy man, whose name turns out to be "Rich in Patience." That encounter begins the king's strange, otherworldly journey, a journey full of disturbing, perplexing events with one who has defied death. The king was to complete a task consisting of the ordeal of carrying a corpse across a graveyard at night. The corpse was still inhabited, and told 24 strange riddles for the king to solve. At the end, the king awakes as if from a dream, full of knowledge and transformed. Shiva (the divinity) "lifted the veil of ignorance that had been concealing from his (the king's) consciousness the immortal essence of his earthly life" (p. 216).

An analysis of this tale would show the underlying meanings such as the "chink" in the king's ego of "apparent perfection which allows him to be laid open to the influence of life, and through the contact with an alien element, transformed" (Zimmer, 1973, p. 217). This will be brought up in the discussion of Khidr's depth psychological meaning. For the moment the similarities to the Khidr myth are all that need attention. The hero's journey, the encounter with the wise old man, the gift of fruit (recall Mason's encounter at Ephesus) which equates to the fish that came to life. Then there is the transformation of the fruit into a hidden treasure, a jewel, the philosopher's stone, the Lapis which Khidr represents. There is a contract made for trials to be passed, the strange riddles, and Khidr's bizarre behavior. The overall feeling is one of liminality and dark ambiguity of the unreal and otherworldly. Knowledge and transformation, realizing the "immortal essence of his human life," are the reasons for the journey of the king. The nature of the enigmatic Khidr is

suggested in the sage's name "Rich in Patience," for this was the lesson Moses needed to learn.

Eros. In pondering the reason for such absolute devotion to the quest in the myth, I wondered, is Eros a quality associated with Khidr? The answer is yes, definitely. I have not located much material dealing directly with this aspect of an encounter with Khidr, but I believe it to be essential to understanding his powerful appeal to Moses in the myth, to the Moslem soul, and to the Psyche. Alluring, fascinating mystery is an important aspect of any archetype encountered directly. The numinousem, the religious experience of such a contact is so great that it produces such an upheaval in the personality and intense affect, that it can only be called passionate. The encounter with Khidr is certainly all of that. There is a alluring quality to this stranger; otherwise why does Moses turn in his steps to meet Khidr, and willingly surrender all cognitive processing and power of speech to this Other?

Eros in the corpus of Khidr legends may be seen in images of Moses and Khidr as two lovers (Mayet, 1994), entwined like two eagles locked together in the sky in the swirling drop to the earth of their lovemaking. It may be recalled from our earlier discussion that Khidr's festival day is held in the early spring, at a time when fertility rites are held in agricultural communities. In the Turkish legend the young man, Khidr, and his maiden, Ellez, had been separated for a long time. When they finally were re-united in a passionate embrace on the night of the Khidrellez celebration, they died of overwhelming joy (Mayet, p. 10).

In attempting to document a parallel process to the work of this dissertation, there is a hope in me that somehow a deeper dimension to the writing will be revealed. There is the even more secret hope that a new, exciting layer of relationship with the archetypal level of the unconscious will shine forth like a tiny bright wet bud

of an erotic flowering plant. I have tried to record some of the trails the relationship with Khidr leaves in my life. The dreams, synchronistic events, chance meetings, and coincidental words, the appearance of the right book, and intimations of immortality that linger after a passionate bout with meaningful and interconnected events within a short span of time--all are exciting indications of the proximity of the archetype. This confluence of affect and events creates implications and poignancy that cause somatic reactions--racing heart, shortness of breath, dilated pupils, tingling sensations of arousal, and flushed skin. Thus I use the word "erotic."

It is my observation that desire plays in the transference and Eros truly plays a part in the space and awareness of encounter with Khidr. This is felt as surely and subtly as a mysterium coniunctionis between analyst and client. Khidr's presence touches the Psyche with gestures and glances, reaching out from between the words of the narrative in the holy book of Islam. Sufi poetry, with its sensual allusions such as lines immortalizing the "greening" of the downy hair on the beloved's face, is not afraid of unveiled passion for the sake of the Quest:

Your down is Khizr, and your mouth is the Water of Life...

(Hafiz, quoted in Schimmel, 1992, p. 72)

The yielding of the one-sidedness of ego sets the stage for surrender to a higher wisdom to the beloved of the Sufis. There is a shift in perspective and affect associated with a Khidr encounter that may be felt physically and well as psychologically.

Khidr is considered by John Haule an "angel of love," the "Third" in a romantic relationship between man and woman, man and God (1990, p. 211). The Third is an intermediary much as the archangel Gabriel was for the Prophet Mohammed in the Cave, and as Khidr was for Moses, and for Ibn 'Arabi. The words

of Sura 18:66, in which Khidr is described as “one of our servants unto whom we had given mercy and had taught knowledge from our presence” is what Haule calls a claim for transcendent sublimity (p. 216). The Third is “a transpersonal, autonomous, directing intelligence, mutual to the two partners, somehow constituted by their union and yet not reducible to either of them nor directly manipulable” (p. 211).

Khidr shows us through his lessons to Moses that sometimes it is important to make exceptions to the rule that is the community consensus, says Haule (1990, p. 211), the law the one-sided view which Moses represents. A couple who elects to follow the guidance of the Third may end up bearing a significant tension. It may occasionally happen that our guide pulls us in a different direction than that of the collective morality (Haule, 1990, p. 215). “Khidr teaches a truth that surprises mortal ken” (p. 214). The “Third” in a romantic relationship must be followed, says Haule (p. 211). I might add, just as Moses must follow Khidr. In the dreamy words of a Lebanese poet well known in the West,

When love beckons, follow him, Though his ways are hard and steep. And
when his wings enfold you yield to him, Though the sword hidden among his
pinions may wound you. And when he speaks to you, believe in him, Though
his voice may shatter your dreams as the north wind lays waste the garden.
(Gibran, 1968, p. 11)

This irresistible attraction is an important aspect of Khidr. It explains Moses' unrelenting search, pushing onwards through wilderness until age or death overtakes him. It also explains the existence of this dissertation.

Keryeni (1944/1992) describes Eros as a compassionate deity and as an aspect of the character of the Greek god, Hermes. Compassion is not obvious but not necessarily lacking in Khidr. His actions, including the murder of the child and the scuttling of the boat, were not done out of perversity or an antisocial personality

disorder on Axis II of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). The will of Allah, the Compassionate and Merciful, the fount of higher wisdom, guided Khidr to these actions for reasons which Moses would ultimately understand to be necessary for good reasons.

Hekate. I have been asked, “Could this archetype, the Khidr who is met on the journey, who guides and re-orientes the seeker, be a woman or have a female counterpart? What about the feminine aspect of the archetype?”

It is true that archetypes as described in Jungian psychology have a dual aspect, a feminine and masculine, light and dark side. They are Janus-like, containing both sides of the polar opposites in one. Hermes, a distant counterpart of Khidr, has both male and female aspects, as a Hermaphrodite in the totality of being expressed in the Kabbalistic doctrine of Adam Kadmon and in the alchemical figure Mercurius/Rebis. Elijah also has a tale told about his becoming a hetaria. This statement must therefore apply to Khidr in the essential nature of the archetypal image. The Islamic Khidr is a man of indeterminate age, sometimes appearing ever youthful, sometimes ancient. The Khidr parallel figure in Judaism, Elijah the prophet, is also immortal and mutable in appearance. In an ancient rabbinical tale, Elijah actually takes on the form of a woman and becomes a prostitute in order to fool the Roman persecutors of the pious rabbi Meir (Ginzberg, 1956, p. 590).

A perusal of the accounts of the Sufi mystics suggests that Khidr connects directly with women. Schimmel tells us that there were, and I suspect still are, “even women mystics who were guided by Khidr himself and received spiritual instruction from him” (1975, p. 427).

Does Khidr have a feminine counterpart? The Greek goddess Hekate may fit this description. The correspondences are worth noting. Hekate is considered the

most mysterious and formidable of all the goddesses in the ancient world, according to one source of information (Ronan, 1992, p. 4). Hekate is known for her role as goddess of the crossroads, which in ancient Greece was the “trivia,” the tri-via, meeting place of the three ways. Her association with journeying and her origin in what is now Turkey as a solar goddess (Jung sees the Khidr myth as a sun-god rebirth legend) suggest a parallel.

Most striking in the possible Khidr-Hekate connection is the significance of Ephesus to both. Ephesus, where St. Paul preached, is the site of the cave of the Seven Sleepers, the story setting the stage for Khidr’s entrance. Ephesus is also the center of the cult of Artemis. Statues of Hekate have been found near Artemis’ temple. Farnell (1992, p. 22) suggests a connection between the two goddesses. Of extreme interest to the question at hand about Khidr, however, is the curious story telling of how the wife of Ephesus inhospitably received Artemis. By way of punishment, the goddess changed her into a dog, but repenting at last changed her into her human form. The woman hanged herself for shame, but was raised to life again and appeared in the costume of Artemis and received the name of Hekate (p. 22). The appearance of the dog at Ephesus, the inhospitable welcome, and rebirth themes may all indicate a connection or counterpart in a feminine form to Khidr. In this study, however, I have chosen not to amplify the feminine (or hermaphrodite) aspect of the archetype, but to focus on the specific character of Khidr as he is found in Islamic scripture and legend following the model of Keryeni’s classic study of Hermes (1944/1992). Rather than dilute the image by generalization, the goal here is to differentiate Khidr so that he and his wisdom may be clearer to our impatient rational questioning.

Hermes. Truly a guardian of the threshold, Hermes is the ancient Greek god of the journey. At crossroads where different ways come together, and a decision to change one's direction of travel is possible, shrines were erected in honor of Hermes. These wayside shrines were usually of unadorned, ithyphallic stones (the **Hermes**). The shape of the **Herm** is related to Hermes' libidinous fertility, reminiscent of the standing phallus-shaped stones (**lingam**) dedicated to Shiva in Hindu temples. The implication of the stone of the **herm** and the rock where Khidr waits are about time and place, as they mark a crossroads of potential encounter. The stone is the **Lapis**, the philosopher's stone, which we will hear more about in conjunction with Khidr as we discuss alchemical symbolism. At this point suffice to say "the philosopher's stone--which is what the Emerald Tablet (of Hermes, 'the **Tabula Smaragina**') is all about--is probably the most sacred alchemical scripture that exists. It really is a summary of the individuation process"(Edinger, 1995, p. 158). So, for an initial introduction to Hermes, boundaries and travel, libido and decision, transformation and opportunity (as **kairos**, the abstract, alchemical "right time") come to mind.

"The most eloquent representation of Hermes is probably the bust with two faces; one is turned towards humans, the other towards the gods, thus symbolizing the dual meaning of all reality, the double meaning of all speech"(Paris, 1990, p. 62). Communication is Hermes' forte. Not only is he involved with meaning and interpretation, as evident in our word "hermeneutic," he is the fleet messenger who actually carries thought between the divine and mortal beings. "The Hermes myth places communication at the intersection of all levels of language, at the point where complexity threatens to become confusion. He is comfortable somewhere between the explicit and the implicit" (Paris, p. 63). In the presence of Hermes, one may expect to encounter ambiguity, paradox, and confusion. "We must be prepared for

not only for what is immediately intelligible, but also for what is strangely uncanny” (Keryeni, 1944/1992, p. 5).

What does Hermes have to do with the Khidr myth? Certain elements of Hermes character correspond to what we know of Khidr. Each is a psychopomp, a guide to souls on the journey, an intermediary between human and divine, at home in the “place of the middle.” The stone upon which Khidr sits waiting and the ithyphallic stone erected at the crossroads for Hermes suggest the symbol of the Lapis, the philosophers’ stone. Both Khidr and Hermes are associated with ambiguity, confusion, and paradox. Just as Moses represents law, logic, rationality, and order to Khidr’s circular, intuitive ways, so the ambiguous Hermes find his opposite in Hestia, goddess of the hearth, home, stability, and clarity, and in the clear, distinct logic of Apollo.

An important feature of the Khidr encounter is its time and place, and the liminal quality of altered perception in that sacred and chaotic realm. Hermes is a denizen of just such a place beyond the border, a liminal zone. “Hermes lives outside the boundaries established by custom and by law. “In my Hermes Psychopomp I believed I could define his domain as a ‘no-man’s-land’, that is, as a hermetic intermediary realm, surrounded by established limits” (Jung & Keryeni, Le Divin Eripon quoted in Keryeni, 1944/1992, p. 69).

The differences between Hermes and Khidr outweigh the similarities. The story of the quest for immortality and knowledge does not find a close parallel in legends of Hermes. Differences may also be discerned in the way their actions are interpreted. Khidr is a rebirth figure, not a Trickster as is the Greek god. Hermes is “leering, jesting, insulting... flashing insight from the dark and mysterious, from alternating sexual modes” (hence the word “hermaphrodite,” an infrequently seen

shape-shifting aspect of Elijah, one not identified here for Khidr) (Doty, 1978, p. 363). Hermes is known for performing actions appearing “questionable from a moral point of view” (Keryeni, 1944/1992, p. 3). Khidr’s actions also seem of dubious intent, but in the Qur’an the moral issue is resolved when Moses learns that all the seemingly cruel actions were for the good and not done of Khidr’s will, but by divine direction. Khidr is above all a reflection and projection of the Islamic soul and is trusted as an emissary of Allah; thus his very name commands respect, and reverence.

Mercurius, known also as Mercury, is the Greek Hermes’ counterpart in ancient Rome. Rather than repeat the characteristics of Hermes, the discussion of Mercurius will be deferred to the discussion of alchemy. In that context, Mercurius may be appreciated as quicksilver, paradoxical, and in Khidr fashion, integral as a Third to the process of transformation.

Hallmarks of the Khidr myth are immortality, knowing of a nonmortal nature, ambiguity and confusion, shock and impatience, transformation and liminal consciousness, and finally the importance of being conscious of being at the right place at the right time, the kairos. Somehow Moses did not initially recognize the place where Khidr would be encountered. The opportunity was missed. A strange event had to occur first, the roasted fish come to life, and missed only later. Then a retracing of steps, a regression and lowering of ego defenses before the one who knows, before Khidr is encountered. Khidr’s appearance, as we will see, is often associated with bizarre events and a turning around, a reversal of direction. That he knows what he seeks is revealed in his statement “that is the place we seek,” referring to the rock where they had rested and the fish had come to life. This rock is where Khidr, one might imagine, sits knowingly, awaiting the approach of the story’s hero, Moses.

Summary

The question “Who Is Khidr?” finds no easy answers. The mythologem reflecting Khidr’s nature is ancient, timeless, and multifaceted. The story of Moses and the mysterious stranger encountered at the place where the fish came back to life in Sura 18 of the Qur’an gives us the core of knowledge from which to proceed.

That the mythologem found in Sura 18 of the Qur’an is archetypal should be somewhat clearer. The similarities we have found in cultures, religions, countries, and eras of history attest to archetypal nature of Khidr and the story in Sura 18. We have enjoyed an overview of several possible parallels including Elijah the Prophet, the Alexander legend, the Gilgamesh Epic, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Hermes, even myths which are distant cousins, such as those involving Socrates’ daimonion, the Golem, Mephistopheles, and Hekate. Within this evolving hermeneutic, Khidr may begin to show more of himself and of the function of the archetypes, the mysterious primordial patterns that set our feet moving, dancing, and romancing, or hesitant and heavy with pain on paths we do not always consciously chose or fully understand.

Chapter 5 The Myth of the Hero

“Breaking some respected boundaries means a torrent of new life”
(Teilhard de Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man, 1955/1975)

Archetypal Themes in Myth

In this chapter the myth of Khidr as it appears in Sura 18 is viewed through the lens of an archetypal theme, that of the hero's journey. There are certain patterns within human beings that are the same all over the world and throughout all epochs. These patterns appear repeatedly in enduring myths of the human journey, telling of the perplexities of existence: joy, suffering, desire, failure, transformation, and rebirth.

Myths and favorite fairy tales, stories that capture the imagination and endure for generations, do so for a reason. Christopher Vogler, a story analyst for major motion picture studios, analyzes the phenomenal success of modern myths in the form of movies such as Star Wars and Close Encounters of the Third Kind. His book, The Writer's Journey (1992), is a practical writer's guide to plots of successful stories. Using Joseph Campbell's (1973) The Hero with a Thousand Faces as a source, Vogler began to understand that “these films drew people in a special way because they reflected the universally satisfying patterns Campbell found in myths. They had something people needed” (p. 4). Depth psychologists call these patterns “archetypes.” Archetypes appear to arise autochthonously from the primal nature of soul, or as Jung termed it, the collective unconscious, “to direct the cousin of matter, energy” (Tigue, 1994, p. 8).

The myth of the hero is an archetypal theme identified with the solar myths of the ancient Near East, the birthplace of the myths of Khidr, Gilgamesh, and Elijah.

The timeless, universal re-telling of the myth testifies to a felt constant of truth and a morphic resonance of human body and psyche with that cosmic event. It is possible to describe definite stages for the development of certain types of heroic myths.

Joseph Campbell (1973) defined these stages as “departure, initiation, and return” (p. ix). The Bible story of Jonah and the whale tells of a reluctant hero who symbolizes the sun, who is swallowed up by a sea monster and is born again in the morning. The myth of Khidr is about meeting with the transformative energy of an archetype when there is a psychological need for balance and change of direction.

Vogler delineates several themes in what he calls “the Writer’s Journey,” the stages of the hero’s journey in a myth, fairy tale, or enduring, successful story. Campbell’s outline of the Hero’s Journey is amended by Vogler to reflect some common themes in movies. I have reproduced Vogler’s outline with the Khidr journey incorporated in parallel stages (Table 1).

Table 1
Khidr Myth as Hero's Journey

Archetypal Journey	Khidr Myth
Act 1. Departure from ordinary world Traveler, pilgrim role Call to adventure Refusal of call Watering hole Meet the mentor Cross the threshold	Moses leaves world of civilization. Traveler role God tells Moses of wisest man Moses misses place of the fish Confluence of the two seas, the spring. Meet Khidr Enter into contract
Act 2. Descent, Initiation, Penetration Tests, allies, enemies Confusion Supreme ordeal, apotheosis The Ultimate boon	Liminality Khidr's three deeds, trials Ambiguity, anxiety Khidr's explanation, denouement New way of knowing
Act 3. Return Master of the two worlds Brings back the Elixir New life, rebirth	Khidr leaves Moses Dhul Qarnein joins people Brings wisdom. Builds wall between city and outsiders New knowing, new perspective

Note: Adapted from Campbell, J. (1973). The Hero with a Thousand Faces. Bollingen Series XVII Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (p. ix)

The Koran (G. Sale, Trans., 1877). London: William Tegg & Company. (Sura 18)

Vogler, C. (1992). The Writer's Journey Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions. (p. 16.)

The Khidr Myth as Hero's Journey

The journey of Moses with Khidr in the Qur'an begins as a classic Hero's Journey. The quest takes the hero out of his ordinary world into the wilderness or desert, a necessary first stage. The prologue to the Khidr myth may be found in the opening tale of Sura 18, the tale of the Seven Sleepers, who slept 309 years in a dark, womb-like cave, unconscious to the world around them. The image of the cave suggests an early stage of development, incubation, and preparation for the next movement of psyche. This motif leads Jung to suggest that this entire Sura is a Rebirth mystery (1939/1944, p. 1). The meaning of the solar cycle of myths is to become a "child again, of returning to the parental shelter" (1912-1956, p. 223), (to the womb, the cave, darkness). Religions and hero-sun myths express the spiritualized libido's desire to be reborn, to become immortal, like the sun-god.

The awakening of the Seven Sleepers prepares the stage for the story of Khidr. Moses is the hero in this myth, and like most heroes his birth takes place under extraordinary circumstances. Many heroes have two mothers, making them unlike ordinary mortals. Frequently they are "exposed and then reared by foster parents" (Jung, 1912/1956, p. 321). Hiawatha's mother Wenonah dies after giving birth, and her place is taken by Nokomis. Buddha, too, was brought up by a foster mother (p. 321). Moses fits this dual mother pattern in his biblical history of being found in a basket on the river, and claimed by the Pharaoh's daughter who hired his mother to nurse him.

The enduring appeal of the Khidr myth is linked to its possession of the elements of the journey of the hero. It is a tale with essential well-defined stages and specific necessary characters that stir the unconscious mind. Moses is willing to

surrender his home in the “ordinary world” to embark on the journey into the wilderness.

The Call to Adventure takes the form of a summons or a challenge issued to the hero in the myth structure outlined by Vogler. A reason for Moses’ quest is given in legend, the traditional hadith of Islam. God issues a challenge to Moses’ self-assuredness. The leader of the Hebrews and chosen transmitter of God’s law believes that he has more knowledge than anyone in the world. His pride grows. In a commentary we learn that God presents a challenge to Moses. He informs the proud hero that there is indeed, a wiser one on the earth. Moses asks God to tell him where he could find this wise one. God instructs Moses to go to a place “where the two seas meet, and at that place he would find that wiser one sitting on a rock. God tell Moses to take a fish with him in a basket. Paradoxically, where the fish is lost, Moses will find what he is seeking (Sale, 1877, p. 244). This hints of the theme underlying the entire myth; one must let go in order to gain, and die in order to be reborn.

When Moses hears the Call to Adventure, he responds as a hero: he embarks on the quest into the unknown. He leaves the Ordinary World where his role of lawgiver and leader implies order and reason. It is useful for psychological interpretation of the myth to consider that Moses must have already developed a good deal of ego strength when he strikes out into the dangerous wilderness. One does not voluntarily go beyond the boundaries of the normal, familiar world without a sense of resolve and direction. To take up with a stranger and agree not to question but to follow on an unknown path takes trust, courage, and perhaps blind foolhardiness. This could also be said for the patient entering into a therapeutic relationship. There must be some driving inner push towards change, and willingness to expose oneself to the unknown.

What is the prize that brings the hero to make the journey out of the comfort and security of the known and ordinary world? The dedicated, even obsessive, concentration of the hero on the quest for the Holy Grail is no less focused than that of Moses. "What should I fear? What else can befall a man except that he should go to meet his destiny?" These words of Sir Gawain as he rode alone through the wilderness to meet the Green Knight echo the compelling need of the hero to follow an inner voice (Zimmer, 1973, p. 68).

Consider the case of Oedipus, "who had to know" (Hollis, 1998, p. 31). He undertook a journey in spite of consequences that might await him, though he feared that what he had to do might destroy him. His mother-consort urges him to close down the investigation. But he has to know, and although that knowledge is destructive of the ego world he has constructed, his suffering at last brings him to Colonus, where the gods bless him for his journey" (p. 31). Moses perspective of reality is likewise changed by his experience on the journey with Khidr.

The hero's deeply felt response to his call is heard in the Qur'an, in Moses' determined words, "I will not cease to go forward until I come to the place where the two seas meet; or I will travel for a long space of time"(sura 18:60). (Note on the "long space of time," "the original Arabic word properly signifies the space of eighty years and upwards" Sale, 1877, p. 244). If Moses does not achieve his goal, what will be his fate? The primal drive of the id, the fear of Thanatos, the survival instinct powers the hero's quest. He seeks the greater wisdom of the one he has heard rumors of, but most importantly he fears death, just Alexander, in the ancient Iskandernameh romance, sought the Water of Eternal Life, and Gilgamesh sought to avoid the fate of death that claimed his friend Enkidu.

The goal of the hero is to find a means of avoiding death as symbolized in Khidr's "Water of Eternal Life." The Water of Life, as mentioned, is the aqua permanens of the alchemists. The opus, the quest must be undertaken as a vital task. In meeting Khidr one meets the Self. The quest is the journey of individuation.

This story reveals a deeper layer of the myth. For Moses, the conscious quest is to find this wise man, and with the knowledge he gains, to become immortal. This underlying motivation of fear of death and desire for life and wholeness is seen in Gilgamesh's journey, and is the basis for the Alexander legend. The intervention of God, of desire for something missing, creates the possibility of compensation. First, Moses must be willing to go to this boundary place of meeting of water and wisdom, and in so doing, lose contact with his community and journey to a place carrying something he must lose: the fish. The fish disappears into the water, ancient symbol of the unconscious. Moses must learn in this quest to let his intellectual function slide into the intuitive waters of Khidr's wisdom, and allow his ego to disappear into the unconscious for rebirth, just as the preceding story of the Seven Sleepers hinted.

The psychic life force, the libido, symbolizes itself in the sun or personifies itself in figures of heroes with solar attributes. The symbol of the sun in fact is seen in the opening story of Sura 18, at the Cave of the Seven Sleepers. "And thou mightest have seen the sun when it had risen, to decline from their cave towards the right hand, and when it went down, to leave them on the left hand" (Sura 18:17). Again, in the closing section of the Sura of The Cave, we read of Dhu'lQarnayn that "he followed his way until he came to the place where the sun setteth, and he found it to set in a spring of black mud, then he continued his way, until he came to the place where the sun riseth" (Sura 18:86).

“Heroes are usually wanderers, and wandering is a symbol of longing, of the restless urge, which never finds its object, of nostalgia for the lost mother” (Jung, 1912/1956, p. 205). The sun comparison can easily be taken in this sense: the heroes are like the wandering sun, from which it is concluded that the myth of the hero is a solar myth. Wandering is a characteristic of the hero, which appears in the myths of Khidr, Elijah, and Gilgamesh. Moses must wander to find Khidr as well as when he is with Khidr, and it is on the journey itself that transformative encounters may occur.

There are subtler, more important motivations for Moses’ journey. Common to all mythic heroes is a longing for wholeness. In Greek tragedy the most common tragic flaw, or hamartia, is hubris, pride or arrogance (Vogler, 1992, p. 108). Heroes are typically “lacking something,” a possession, a mate, a family member, or “a quality in the personality such as compassion, forgiveness, or the ability to express love (pp. 106-107). For Gilgamesh, the lack was an immaturity expressed as inability to accept life on life’s terms (Tigue, 1994, p. 67). For Superman, the flaw was his vulnerability to kryptonite. The tragic flaw of Moses comes from his over-identification with the Jewish Law and reason. He is a gifted leader, but his ego is inflated. He is impatient and out of balance with his inferior, feeling function.

The first mythic moment on the journey is the appearance of a Threshold Guardian. Moses and Joshua of Nun halt for rest and refreshment. Hungry and tired, Moses asks his servant, Joshua of Nun, kindly to bring the fish he has been carrying for their dinner. At this point strange things begin to happen. The fish has disappeared. The fish is a remarkable creature, an archetypal figure guarding the gateway of the extraordinary world. A characteristic of the Threshold Guardian is that it gives signals that the hero must learn to read. If Moses had not been able to see past the outward appearance of what might have been simply a forgotten fish, he

could not have entered the Special World. The Hero must therefore recognize the odd or unusual, the signal that beckons him to leave the planned agenda.

The fish is a mythic guide who leads the hero over the threshold into the Special World, just as the white rabbit caught Alice's attention and lured her into the Looking Glass. Animals, fish, birds, an unusual rock, even the wind in the treetops can catch the attention in this way at any moment when a Khidr encounter is near. The strange behavior of the fish is a signal, an archetypal content of the unconscious that tests and captures Moses' attention in order to lure him back to an earlier position. There is a word for this, "Paedomorphosis," meaning "a process whereby evolution itself can be seen to proceed by retracing its steps, as it were, along the path which leads to the dead end and making a fresh start in a more promising direction" (Field, 1996, p. 15)

Joshua of Nun excitedly tells Moses that at the rock where they had stopped to rest earlier that day, the cooked and salted fish jumped out of the basket and into the water where "it took its way into the sea in a wonderful manner" (Sura 18:63).

Joshua said "None made me to forget it, except Satan, that I should not remind thee of it" (Sura 18:63). The dark power, the shadow has intervened in the hero's quest and an obstacle has caused a detour. Moses is probably tired, dusty, and stiff from the journey, disappointed at having nothing to eat, and disgruntled at having his forward march interfered with. However, a realization comes to him, for he says "This is what we sought after" (Sura 18:64).

Moses and Joshua of Nun then turned from the direction they were headed and set out to retrace their steps to the rock where they had previously had a rest. The image is one of reversal and regression, a lowering of libidinal energies in Moses' feeling of hunger, tiredness and irritation with Joshua and the incident of the fish.

This state of mind, which Jung (1939/1944) calls “loss of soul,” or an abbaissement du niveau mental, is important to our later discussion on liminal states as receptive to psychological shift of the type that Moses experiences with Khidr (p. 19).

Back at the place where the fish was revived, on the very rock where they had rested, a stranger is perched, as if waiting for them. Is it possible that the transformed fish has become Khidr, as Jung suggests (1950/1980, p. 140)? This would certainly be characteristic of the archetype of the Shapeshifter in Vogler’s model. The new face on the scene is the servant of God, who is identified in Qur’anic commentaries as “one of our servants, unto whom we had granted mercy from us, and whom we had taught wisdom from before us” (Sura 18:65). Moses realizes that this stranger is the very one he has longed to meet. Khidr is the Mentor in this tale. The role of the Mentor or Wise Old Man may include protector, guide, teacher, trainer, tester, and bestower of special gifts.

Campbell’s works show that archetypal patterns that appear repeatedly in stories and retain their appeal and meaning. The theme of the meeting at the watering hole is an example. The bar scene, a modern “watering hole” in Star Wars, was the place where Luke Skywalker see flashes of Obi Wan Kenobi’s spiritual power. Interestingly the mentor’s name is “I-be-one Can-no-be” revealing a paradox of being and not-being that suggests the unknowing ambiguity of a Khidr encounter (Tigue, 1994, p. 117)

“Why do so many heroes pass through bars and saloons at this point in the story?” asks Vogler (p. 162). The answer lies in the hunting metaphor of the Hero’s journey. Upon leaving the Ordinary World of village or den, hunters will often head straight for a watering hole to look for game. The watering hole is a natural congregating place and a good spot to observe and get information. The crossing of

the first threshold may have been long, lonely, and dry. Bars are natural spots to recuperate, pick up gossip, make friends, and confront Enemies (Vogler, 1992, p. 162)

The place of encounter with Khidr, the “servant of God” is the classic spot for the hero to meet the Mentor: the watering hole or well. In the film, Star Wars, Luke Skywalker has a significant encounter with Yoda in the space saloon. In many modern films as in the contemporary world, the meeting place is the bar, the watering hole where news is exchanged and significant encounters happen. It is typically at a spring of flowing water, a river or a pool, that animals and thirsty travelers come to drink, where hunters wait, and news is exchanged. The spring is where Enkidu was first seen and eventually led to meet his fated companion, Gilgamesh. The well or spring is the primal water, die Urquelle of the unconscious, the aqua permanens of the alchemists. In Western movies, the saloon was the place of encounter. The watering place is where animals meet; the well is where Jesus meets the Samaritan woman, where the fairy-tale princess meets the enchanted frog-prince who retrieves her golden ball.

“The place where the two seas meet” designated in Sura 18:60 is the objective of Moses on the initial phase of his quest. It is at this place, where the Moses’ salted fish miraculously swam away, that Khidr is first encountered. The fish Joshua carried has been resurrected, as a representation of the miracle of rebirth. Moses, as ego, must undergo a change before being able to assimilate this reality.

Of course, Moses’ goal echoed in the tales of Alexander the Great and the Gilgamesh epic is to find the Spring of Life. In Suhrawardi’s story, the prisoner follows the purple archangel through the desert to reach the spring beyond the cosmic mountain to the otherworldly place where Khidr teaches of transcendent wisdom

(Corbin, 1972). Water is a pivotal image in the Khidr legend. Not only is Khidr associated with the Water of Eternal Life, but he is also patron of the sea. Water links Khidr with the alchemists, and the transformative aqua permanens.

A contract is made between the hero and the Mentor. Moses said, "Shall I follow thee that thou mayest teach me part of that which thou hast been taught, for a direction unto me?" (Sura 18:66). Khidr denies this request, for he believes that Moses would not be able to understand or accept the things that he would witness. "Thou canst not bear with me" (Sura 18:67). Insistently, Moses pleads and promises that he will be able to bear whatever Khidr does. This action of Moses corresponds to the special act of courage that Vogler identifies as the leap of faith.

Finally relenting, Khidr agrees to allow Moses to accompany him, but under the strict condition that if Moses asks any questions before Khidr is ready to explain, Moses must leave the journey. Here is the moment when transformation becomes possible. The ego relinquishes its hold so that the wisdom of the Self may be known. Moses accepts Khidr's condition and the transformative journey begins. The Crossing of the Threshold is an extended one, beginning with leaving on the quest, intensified by the return to the place of the fish's disappearance, and completed in the initial meeting and negotiation with Khidr. There is no turning back now. This may be likened to the tornado taking Dorothy over the Threshold into the Special World in the Wizard of Oz, or Alice falling down the rabbit hole. This is the descent into the unknown.

The Trials of the Hero

The hero in the classic journey must endure certain trials, or pass a set number of tests in order to prove he is worthy to receive the Elixir. Psyche must suffer four

difficult labors to win back her relationship with Amor. The heroes in The Wizard of Oz are given tests, such as the apparently unachievable task of fetching the broomstick of the Wicked Witch. Sir Gawain has to pass three tests of his character with the Green Knight's Lady before he is ready to go to his final battle in the Green Chapel. If the hero is not able to pass the tests he may suffer the "disintegration of the self-consisting of his being" (Zimmer, 1973, p. 72).

A greater understanding of the phenomenon of encountering Khidr, for the non-Islamic mind, may be achieved with a depth psychological examination of the events experienced on the journey. There are three actions performed by Khidr in Sura 18. The first is putting a hole in the poor people's ship, the second is the murder of the young boy, and the third is the rebuilding of the wall in the town that refused food and shelter to the travelers.

The number 3.

It seems strange that in all his writings about Khidr, Jung does not give any attention to the three events witnessed by Moses on his journey with Khidr. This material is extremely rich and integral to the make-up of the Khidr story or any Hero's Journey myth. The three actions carried out by Khidr are hard to overlook. They are enigmatic, shocking, seemingly unjust, horrible, and incomprehensible. These events are explained in a straightforward manner by Khidr in the Qur'an, as the will of Allah that serves a higher purpose than is evident to mortal beings.

There are always tests or obstacles that the hero must surmount. The next section of Sura 18 describes the three trials provided by Khidr's actions that await the unsuspecting Moses. I would suggest that these shocking events Moses on the journey with Khidr are highly significant. The journey is similar to another tale of a

man who followed a spiritual guide through scenes of horror, the tale of Dante and Virgil in the Divine Comedy (Huse, 1954). The story of Khidr does more than the exploration of the Inferno of Dante's imagination, though. The events are truly not understood until the journey is over. Khidr then explains to Moses that his incomprehensible actions have outcomes and purposes that are for the best. He has not acted in out of his own will, but in response to Allah's divine direction.

The number of Khidr's deeds is significant. The number 3 often appears in myths and fairy tales, as in the fairy tale, The Woodcutter's Son, where a genie (Mercurius) grants three wishes to the hero, or in the three trials of Sir Gawain in his agreement with the Green Knight. The number 3 appears in Sura 18 as the three deeds of Khidr and again as the three parts to the story itself. These three sections are the Seven Sleepers, Moses' journey, and Dhu'lQarnayn. As Jung (1948/1983) noted, three is the Trinity, also the "ternarius," a "sign of concord and conjunction" in medieval number symbolism (p. 221).

In alchemical texts, we come across the image of a pair linked together by a third. This pair may be a king and queen, or the alchemical adept and his soror mystica, linked by a third, usually Mercurius who clearly stands for the Holy Spirit. Haule (1990) believes that Khidr is "the Third," playing a transformative catalyst in alchemical and transference relationships (p. 215). In Sura 18, there is a relationship between Moses and Khidr, and the third would be Allah, the wisdom behind the disturbing events directing Khidr's actions. Allah is the ultimate wisdom and eternal life Khidr carries in his bowl, the object of the quest of the Grail, of Alexander the great, Gilgamesh, and Moses.

In psychological terms, this places Moses in the position of the ego and Khidr as the Self, the numinous archetypal form that Moses encounters in his liminal state

of regression and disorientation in the place of the middle. It is in the very middle of the three parts of the story that Khidr is encountered. Three is the number of days of the “night sea imprisonment,” as in Longfellow’s The Song of Hiawatha, and the three days Christ spent in the underworld (Jung, 1912/1956, p. 331). The three events on the journey re-state the motif of initiation, the dark frightening experience of the psychological night sea journey that leads to transformation and re-birth. In Jungian psychology, the number 3 carries the potential for change and transformation. The odd number wants to move towards even and wholeness, which is represented symbolically as the quaternity.

Interpretation of Khidr’s Three Deeds

The First Deed: The Ship. The two travel together along the seacoast until they come to a ship. Khidr knocks a hole in the ship, rendering it useless. Moses is alarmed and amazed at his companion’s effrontery and destructive action. Unable to contain himself, Moses questions Khidr; “Hast thou made a hole therein, that thou mightest drown those who are on board? Now hast thou done a strange thing.” (Sura 18:71).

Khidr responds, “Did I not tell thee that thou couldst not bear with me?” (Sura 18:72). Moses said, “ Rebuke me not, because I did forget; and impose not on me a difficulty in what I am commanded.” (Sura 18:73) The reason for Khidr’s damaging act of opening the hull to the water is explained at the end of the journey with Moses. It is as a protective measure to protect the ship itself and the treasure within.

Khidr then declares,

This shall be a separation between thee and me; but I will first declare unto thee the signification of that which thou couldst not bear with patience. The

vessel belonged to certain poor men, who did their business in the sea: and I was minded to render it unserviceable, because there was a king behind them, who took every sound ship by force. (Sura 18:78-82)

What can be said of a ship in symbolic terms? It is a representation of the self, a vehicle of the consciousness, which rides upon the waters of the unconscious. The dark, deep waters are the home of the fish, the place of the Nykeia, the night sea journey, the source of renewal and baptism, purification and death by flooding and drowning. A hole in the ship, or in the Self, spells disaster, and this is how Moses, as the observing ego, takes it. He fears for damage to his ego's defense mechanisms and ensuing flooding through the breach in the boundary of his consciousness due to this encounter with the emissary of divine wisdom. The action is paradoxical. The self must be broken down; solve et coagulo.

The greedy pirate king represents a negative force, in Freudian terms; one could surmise possibly a pre-oedipal complex in Moses' journey of individuation. There was a destructive father figure in the form of the Egyptian pharaoh who wished to kill Hebrew boys. Moses was abandoned by his own father and mother, who placed him in a basket on the waters of the Nile. Khidr causes Moses to become aware of the king, the power of the Senex (old man) to steal libidinous energy that will be needed. A hole punched in the outer shell of the ship, the self, makes stillness, waiting, and repair necessary. The ego needs to learn watch and wait, to be still, to learn patience and acceptance of the apparent suffering and injustice that Khidr wreaks. The damage is ultimately for the good, as it can be repaired and the psyche will heal from childhood wounds. Without some pain and humbling, some transformative action to correct the child's narcissism, the inner treasure would be lost.

While writing his important work, *Aion*, in 1947, Jung had a dream that his “small fishing boat had been sunk and that a giant had provided me with a new, beautiful seagoing craft about twice the size of my former boat” (Edinger, 1996, p. 13). This dream informed him that he had to go on with the work, even though he had felt “utterly unequal to the task” (p.13). His further writing reveals his growing sense that his life is connected to something greater. He then moves to the collective in the concept of the “archetype of the God-man and to the phenomenon of synchronicity, which adheres to the archetype. Thus I came to discuss the ichthys and the then new aeon of Pisces” (p. 13). The archetype is the phenomenon that Moses, the observing ego, is encountering; it is Khidr, the giant who is providing means of transformation.

An intriguing image, pairing another Green Man and a shipwreck, is found in Robert Romanyshyn’s “Egos, Angels, and the Colors of Nature” (1994). Romanyshyn proposes green to be the “color of consciousness,” a deep, primitive consciousness that is older than the frequency of our ego consciousness. “In moments of shipwreck,” moments of breakdown of ego consciousness...when the ego can do nothing else but surrender...the green consciousness “announces itself to us” (p. 1). Likewise, the image of shipwreck is experienced as “descent into the unconscious, that uncharted domain which has been the province of depth psychology” (p. 3). There is a natural movement in the seemingly chaotic order of the universe, leading ego consciousness to be shattered. The shipwrecked soul can then slip into a liminal state of merged unknowing with the green consciousness, the primal archetypal essence of life. The experience of this identification with the archetypal Self is destructive but transformative if the ego remains intact. The Khidr Story seems to describe this movement in the depth of Psyche.

The Second Deed: The Boy. Leaving the damaged ship behind, Khidr and Moses and proceed along their way. The second trial begins. Moses' perseverance and patience in his agreement not to ask questions is tested when they meet a youth, a boy sitting on the doorstep of his parent's modest home. In a swift act, Khidr kills the boy. Moses, startled, exclaims, "Hast thou slain an innocent person without his having killed another? Now hast thou committed an unjust action" (Sura 18:74). Khidr replies, "Did I not tell thee that thou couldst not bear with me?" (Sura 18:75).

Moses replies, If I ask thee concerning any thing hereafter, suffer me not to accompany thee: now hast thou received an excuse from me"(Sura 18:76). Khidr's subsequent explanation is as follows:

As for the youth, his parents were true believers; and we feared for them. We knew that the lad, being an unbeliever, would cause them much grief because of his perverseness and ingratitude. We desired that their Lord might give them a more righteous child in exchange for him, and one more affectionate towards them, since they are a faithful, good and deserving couple. (Sura 18:80)

A Jungian knee-jerk reaction to this mythic event might be to identify the young boy as the puer, an undeveloped, young male aspect of Moses' personality. Khidr as the wise old man, the Self, shows Moses that the boy is mortal, expendable, and not helpful for the well being of the parents. This removal of the puer from his parents by death is a violent statement of separation. It was shocking and painful for Moses to witness this act of Khidr's. The subsequent explanation reveals that it was done so that the parents could be spared the grief of a thoughtless and disrespectful son, and that another yet-to-be-born child would come to fill their lives with joy. Again we see the theme of death and rebirth, echoing the theme of the hero's journey.

Who are the parents in the Islamic tale? This couple, so tragically bereaved, is described as faithful to Allah, deserving of a better child in their simple loyalty.

Another loyal couple is suggested, Philemon and Bauchis, who appear in Greek myth as a kindly, generous, and hospitable elderly couple, devoted to each other, who were unfailingly welcoming strangers just as a true Arab would. In the biblical story of Abraham, three angels disguised as travelers appeared in his desert camp on the plains of Marmor. Though he unhesitatingly slayed the fatted lamb for them, a blessing was granted. Likewise, the devoted couple, whose hospitality was so open that they unwittingly played hosts to the gods, were granted eternal union with each other, in the form of a tree.

Philemon and Bauchis appear in Goethe's Faust. In this classic story, the devoted couple is tragically murdered. The urge to power caused Faust to have them killed Philemon and Baucis in order to win more land from the sea. Over-valued intellectuality, rationality, and hubris are driving Faust, just as Moses' one-sidedness and urge to be in rational control is his downfall. The ego needs to surrender in order to learn from the Self. Von Franz (1997) writes that Faust's murder of Philemon and Baucis not only anticipates "Germany's later destructive eruption, but it also symbolizes the attitude of all of us toward inner and outer nature, which we are always trying to exploit. In order to do that, we are continually murdering in ourselves that humble human nature that honors the secret of the psyche, that is, its opening to the divine" (p. 73). According to von Franz, this may be what Jung has in mind when he put the inscription over the door at the house in Bollingen, "Philemonis sacrum-Fausti poenitentia" (p. 73). The parents contain an image of union and wholeness, the coniunctio somehow needing to be protected from the acting out of an undeveloped aspect of the psyche.

The third deed: The Wall. The two travelers approached a certain city. The hour was late, they were hungry, and as was the custom in those days, they asked for

food from the inhabitants. The townspeople, however, did not welcome the strangers among them. Inhospitable actions of this sort would be unheard of in any Arab land, where hospitality to the stranger is unwritten law, tantamount to survival. Khidr, again causing perplexity in his companion, set about a strange business. He took the time and effort to rebuild an old, crumbling wall, which was nearly ready to fall down. At this point Moses, probably hungry, chilled, and tired, began to pout. He criticized Khidr's actions. He suggests that if his mentor had asked for payment for the labor of rebuilding the wall, he might have been rewarded (and they probably would have obtained food and shelter for the night).

Khidr explains that the wall belongs to two orphan youths in the city. Their deceased father was a righteous man who hid a treasure under it under it for self-keeping until they reached the age of responsibility. Khidr tells Moses that "I did not what thou hast seen, of my own will, but by God's direction. This is the interpretation of that which you could not bear in patience" (Sura 18:82). The anxiety produced by ambiguity and unknowing is too much for Moses.

The hidden treasure that Khidr secured for the two boys repeats the motif of the first deed. The treasure on board the ship of the poor people was safeguarded from aggressive, external forces by preventing the sailing of the vessel. Here again Khidr delays the treasure from coming to light and being put to use prematurely. Moses has to learn patience, also. His gifts of wisdom and leadership are vulnerable to misuse by others and by his own repressed shadow side. It is as if Khidr has taken the stance of the protective father, watching over his children to make sure they will be safe until they grow up. The two boys may be seen to represent Moses' undeveloped, unintegrated parts of self. Khidr reveals himself as an angel of god, an archetypal Wise Old Man or even a sort of "Good Fairy Godmother" to the orphan

lads. This is the aspect of the Self that Moses needed to come into contact with. This Khidr aspect is the part within each of us that has the wisdom to protect and heal ourselves.

The three deeds create an affect and an image of dark confusion and painful unknowing. The image is a revelatory one, in the sense of analytic procedure, a beholding of the despicable, the base. This is Theoria (Edinger, 1996, p. 113). The alchemical dictum of finding the gold in the basest material, the prima materia is evident in the three acts of Khidr. Moses, as stifled intellectual function of the ego, follows in silence, hoping to prove himself worthy of the divine being's grace. Other images of darkness as a spiritual path, the via negativa are found in St. John of the Cross' s The Dark Night of the Soul, and in The Cloud of Unknowing (Johnson, 1973). The latter is an 11th century mystical document of Christianity which bids the spiritual pilgrim to "follow without reason in silence, to bear with pain and anxiety, suffer humbly and wait patiently in unknowing, and your whole personality will be transformed" (pp. 182-183). Moses journey was also to wait in unknowing and be transformed.

What does Moses gain for his trouble? Has he attained his goal of greater wisdom? Is immortality found on the quest? The place where the treasured object of the quest is hidden, in the Arthurian stories is called the Chapel Perilous, the inner chamber where the seeker may find the Grail. Vogler calls this place The Inmost Cave" (1992, p. 24). It is necessary for the hero to prove that he has the ego strength necessary for the next stage of the journey. The next stage is often perilous. It brings the hero to face The Supreme Ordeal, perhaps a final battle with the enemy, or a situation when the hero comes near death (pp. 24, 172). The ultimate ordeal is the confrontation with the Self.

We are left with a seemingly unfinished story, a sense that Moses has miserably failed his test and is left standing alone without Khidr. This echoes the Alexander Legend where Khidr leaves Alexander the Great alone without the Water of Life, empty, old, defeated (Mason, 1986).

ALEXANDER. I see only what is in my mind. I am afraid the journey was for nothing.
 KHIDR. Drink. It is cool and fresh.
 ALEXANDER. I cannot drink. I feel the crumbling of my mind.
 KHIDR. It is the ruins dissolving.
 ALEXANDER. I am dissolving! I myself, all I have known.
 KHIDR. Only the ruins. The selves we hold are not our only selves.
 ALEXANDER. O Khidr, am I alone with death? (pp. 30-31)

Khidr extends his hand to steady Alexander on his feet for this last encounter. The lights dim, separating them, remaining a final moment on Alexander alone.

It is unsettling to read this tale, much as a reading of an earlier edition of Grimms' Fairy Tales is shocking and leaves one longing for a happy ending. Modern re-edited versions of fairy tales provide the reader with sweet, happy finales, but what is lost to the unconscious? One of Khidr's characteristics, as we have said, is to shock and disorient. Through the suddenly opened window of the off-balance ego consciousness comes the possibility of new knowing.

What is Moses' strength and gift that gets him through the Ordeal? He has been determined, but above all, willing to be open and try to be patient in the face of waiting and ambiguity. At the same time, his lack is what the quest is really for, he is missing a piece in his character. His wisdom and leadership role as lawgiver and keeper of order is one sided. His ego is inflated. In the meeting with Khidr, Moses is able just barely to keep his intellectual function from intervening. He is unable to walk on with the Divine Messenger, but what human could? The encounter was brief

but profoundly transformative. The hero is not left unchanged. This about face is a “peripetia,” a sudden change of events or reversal of circumstances.

A film about transformation in the modern world has a female figure that behaves much as Khidr does. In A Price above Rubies, (Yakim, 1998) the heroine meets a beggar woman on four occasions. The moments of encounter are crossroads situations. Whenever the bizarre old woman appears, the heroine’s sense of reality is slightly altered. When, in a state of transition and crisis, Sonia actually travels with the beggar woman and listens to her ancient stories, then Sonia is able to move forward. Things become clear and she acts resolutely, consciously.

An understanding of the main character’s transformation in A Price above Rubies may shed light on the meaning of the Moses-Khidr myth. Moses’ questions represent the ego’s intolerance of ambiguity and unconsciousness. The questions Moses and Sonia ask lead to increased consciousness. He is then able to move on. Khidr knew that Moses would not be able to bear with the unknowing, the unconscious state. The ego cannot tolerate the dark state of the nigredo for very long. The Self knows this; thus the separation of Moses and Khidr is imminent. Encounter with the numinous is too powerful to be sustained. When unconscious contents break through it can be dangerous, but the hero’s journey is one of meeting dangers, coming near death, and returning to the world with a boon. Sometimes the hero does not bring back an actual gift, but returns with new wisdom or an new perspective, as in The Wizard of Oz, where Dorothy comes back to Kansas with a new self of self and a new concept of home. In the tales of King Arthur, the Grail is the Elixir that once shared, heals the wounded land, (Vogler, 1992, pp. 247-260). In the Sura we have been discussing, there is a sequel, in the brief tale of Dhu’lQarnayn. The next scene, which takes place back in the ordinary world, suggests the outcome of Moses’ encounter

with Khidr. The hero, Dhu'lQarnayn, is portrayed as a leader helping his people. "We made him powerful in the earth and we gave him means to accomplish everything he pleased" (Sura 18:85). He meted out justice according to divine guidance and built a wall to protect a defenseless folk from "Gog and Magog" who "waste the land" (Sura 18:95).

Jung concludes, from commentaries on the Qur'an, that the mysterious messenger of divine knowledge in Sura 18, Khidr, is also Dhu'lQarnayn, Alexander the Great, and the Sun (1916/1956, pp. 189-190). The Boon or Reward seems to have been granted, for the hero is wise and has brought back the Elixir. It is significant for the theme of rebirth and the goal of finding the water of immortal life, that the last sequence provides revelation on the Last Days. It may be recalled that Khidr, like Elijah and St. George, will be present at the End Times.

The Road Back is essentially another turning point, another threshold crossing which Vogler tells us is an integral part of the hero's journey (1992, p. 219). In psychological terms, this stage represents the resolve of the hero to return to the ordinary world and implement the lessons learned in the Special World (p. 219). As the Sura goes on to say, Moses is exhorted to go to the Jewish people where "They will ask you about all of this" (18:83). That is, the new wisdom of Dhu'lQarnayn (as a form of Moses), is to be shared with the collective conscious. The hero is no longer on his individual quest but involved with the community, showing responsibility and leadership. He has gone into the otherworld of Khidr's presence and returned transformed. His guidance now protects his people as he oversees the building a wall to keep out unruly forces. This act echoes Khidr's repair of the wall that concealed the poor orphans' treasure. The wall is constructed for the people living "Between Two Mountains" (Sura 18:93).

Gilgamesh, in the older myth, was likewise responsible for building a wall for his people, after returning from his journey to find the plant of immortality. Between the two mountains, Jung points out, is once again the “place of the middle,” and this wall is to be a strong defense against Gog and Magog, the featureless, hostile, masses. Moses’ journey of individuation is “an opus contra naturam, which creates a horror vacui in the collective layer and is only too likely to collapse under the collective forces of the psyche” (1939/1944, p. 25).

The content of a myth is “a result of the psychodynamic processes at work within the unconscious mind....therefore,” states Tigue in the Transformation of Consciousness in Myth, “myths are more than their content. They deal with processes that are given form and when realized, add to the psychological and social well being of people” (1994. p. 14).

The rebirth theme in Sura 18 is evoked by the title of the chapter, “The Cave,” taken from the opening tale of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus who awoke in their cave, after 309 years in a dormant state, to a changed, therefore new, world. The idea of a second birth is found at all times and in all places. In the earliest beginnings of medicine it was a magical means of healing; in many religions it is the central mystical experience. Rebirth of the soul from the darkness of the unconscious is represented in the sun-god myth as emerging from death of night to new light of day. The journey of the hero is a metaphor for this Nykeia, this night-sea journey. The symbolism tells us of the human journey from joy to sorrow and sorrow to joy. We recall the travels and grievous losses of Gilgamesh to life and death. Gilgamesh in fact is the “beautiful name of the sun-god hero” which means “Wehfröhmensch, pain-joy human being” (Jung, 1916/1956, p. 168). All of the stories in the previous chapter illustrate a single episode of this cycle of light and darkness, one that repeats

itself in a progressive spiral, reflecting the energy of electrons in the wave particle theory of quantum physics. The minutest particles of matter partake in energy laws that parallel human affect and perception. It is understandable that Jung sees the libido as personified in the form of the hero, a conqueror or a demon.

The wall built by Dhu'lQarnayn in Sura 18 provides a symbolic insulation for the hero after his return from the other world. He has taken on a new quality, has new ego strength, a vestigial sacred veil over his eyes. Like Moses when he descends from the encounter with God on the holy mountain, he is altered from being in the presence of the angelic Khidr. As after a ritual of initiation, the new person emerges vulnerable and open to unclean forces. An experience of a Native American sweat lodge ceremony comes to mind, when I emerged wet, hot, and naked into the night air. The need for protection is for insulation to prevent the holiness and purity of the new self exposed in the ritual from being drained away. This is not only for his own sake but

for the sake of others, since the virtue of holiness is, so to say, a powerful explosive which the smallest touch may detonate, it is necessary in the interest of the general safety to keep it within narrow bounds lest breaking out it should blast, blight, and destroy whatever it comes into contact with.

(Frazer, 1922, pp. 593-594).

The trials, tests, and ordeals that a mythological hero faces do more than simply show that he has the "right stuff" to really be a hero. These trials also force the hero to focus on something larger than himself and his survival. This is, incidentally, the precise key to the recovery program of AA, where the suffering alcoholic is asked to reach out to a Higher Power and to extend a hand to help another struggling to recover from the abyss of drink. "The inner change is truly a heroic transformation of consciousness, one that is demanded of each person who becomes a self-responsible adult" (Harris, 1996, p. 47).

Moses begins his quest lacking in consciousness. As Alexander tells Khidr, “Not Lethe, not forgetfulness. I want no artificial sleep. I want to face my death like Homer’s friends Patroclus and Achilles. Full consciousness. I must be conscious at my death” (Mason, 1989, pp. 19-20). Khidr’s psychological function is compensation for Moses’ ego imbalance. Consciousness is the gift, the Elixir.

Summary

The myth of Khidr is a Hero’s Journey. Drawing on Vogler’s (1992) analysis of the Hero’s Journey, we see how the story follows the pattern of stages Campbell identifies as departure, initiation, and return. The mythological trials of the hero, Moses, symbolize the events of suffering, frustration, and injustices in life that are met on the journey towards individuation. Khidr is the mentor, the threshold guardian who represents the mystagogue in the underworld. The strange journey beginning at the place where the fish is resurrected moves through a liminal zone, a place of initiation, ambiguity, and confusion for Moses. The myth speaks to us out of the profoundly veiled mysticism of Islamic culture, where alchemy originated.

Through this analysis of the Khidr myth, we gain insight into the role of this soul-guide, this Wise Old Man, the doctor of the psyche, as enigmatic, alluring, and quite capable of shocking the self-assured. The goal of the hero is portrayed as immortality and knowledge. Khidr’s “Water of Eternal Life” is, in fact, the aqua permanens of the alchemists. The opus, and the quest must be undertaken as a vital task. In meeting Khidr one meets the Self. The quest is the journey of individuation. As dreams provide insight on the unconscious of a person, so a tale such as the Khidr myth provides the background of a cultural collective unconscious. We have looked at Khidr in a Middle Eastern context, and as a Hero’s Journey. The next chapter

looks at the myth through the writings and amplifications of C. G. Jung.

Chapter 6

Jung, Al-Khidr, and Alchemy

Man is indeed, mortal, but there are some who are immortal, or there is something in us which is immortal. Thus the gods, “a Chidher or a St. Germain,” are our immortal part, which, though incomprehensible, dwells among us somewhere. (Jung, 1916/1956, p. 314)

Archetypes

What modern depth psychology has termed “archetypal psychology,” as introduced by Jung (1961/1973), provides a method of understanding the Khidr myth, along with the Qur’anic text, traditional hadith, and folklore. The definition of an archetype as the prototype of a universal pattern, is in keeping with Stevens’ (1993) statement that “Jung’s hypothesis of the archetype in fact transcended the nature-versus-nurture debate and healed the Cartesian split between body and mind” (p. 13). Jung proposed not only that the archetypal structures were “continuous with structures controlling the behaviour of inorganic matter as well. The archetype was not mere psychic entity but the bridge to matter in general” (1954/1981, p. 216).

If this is so, and we identify Khidr as an archetypal figure, then Khidr is a bridge entity, a denizen of the “betwixt and between,” Turner’s (1967) term for the liminal period in initiation, rites of passage and life-crises that are transformative). An encounter with an archetype in the form of Khidr is an encounter in extraordinary time and space. It occurs in what Corbin (1972) tells us is the Islamic “alam al-mithal, the world of the image, the Mundis Imaginalis; a world that is ontologically as real as the senses and that of the intellect” (p. 7).

“Archetypal” describes the universality and numinous quality of centuries of stories about Khidr as a fascinating, undying, wise, and uncanny being. “Numinous” for Jung, conveys the idea of a quality of the transpersonal dimension. “Numinous” is

a word employed by Rudolf Otto (1917/1950) in The Idea of the Holy to describe spiritual experience (pp. 6-7).

An encounter with a numen is a mysterious, tremendous, uncanny experience. The numen induces awe, an experience that is both awesome and awful. According to Otto, the self experiences the numen as the 'wholly other', which he defines as 'that which is quite beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible, and the familiar' (Adams, 1998, p. 69).

Khidr is a living archetype in the same sense that Elijah is a living archetype. In depth psychology, this is called a "constellated archetype," that is to say one that is "more or less generally active, giving birth to new forms of assimilation. According to the empirical rule, an archetype becomes active and chooses itself when a certain lack in the conscious sphere calls for a compensation of the part of the unconscious" (Jung, 1953/1989, p. 677).

"Archetypes are, by definition, factors and motifs that arrange the psychic elements into certain images, characterized as archetypal, but in such a way that they can be recognized only from the effects they produce" (Jacobi, 1958, p. 31). "At first the notion of the archetype was applied by Jung primarily to psychic "motifs" that could be expressed in images. But in time it was applied to all sorts of patterns, configurations, happenings, and so forth, hence to dynamic processes as well as static representations. Ultimately it came to cover all psychic manifestations of a biological, psychobiological, or ideational character, provided they were more or less universal or typical" (p. 34).

Synchronicity

Synchronicity is associated with the presence of Khidr. Synchronicity is a descriptive term for "the link between two events and their meaning, a link that

cannot be explained by cause and effect” (Bolen, 1979, p. 14). This no surprise, for synchronicity is associated with the proximity of any archetype (Jacobi, 1959).

“Since an archetype is numinous, i.e., it possesses a specific energy, it will attract to itself the contents of consciousness - conscious ideas that render it perceptible and hence capable of conscious realization” (Stevens, 1993, p. 14).

Understanding the role of synchronicity in a Khidr encounter helps place the experience in the field of depth psychology. Jung described three types of synchronicity. First, “there is a coincidence between mental content (which could be a thought or feeling) and outer event” (Bolen, 1979, p. 16). Writings containing Khidr’s name frequently “fell’ into my hands during the research. It is said, “Wenn man ihn ruft, so erscheint er” “If his name is spoken he appears” (Friedlaender, 1913a). Second, “a person has a dream or vision, which coincides with an event that is taking place at a distance (and is later verified)” (Bolen, 1979, p. 16). Third, “a person has an image (as a dream, vision, or premonition) about something that will happen in the future, which then does occur” (Bolen, p. 16).

The first time Jung describes synchronicity is in the foreword to the Wilhelm and Baynes translation of the Chinese text of The I Ching or Book of Changes (1950).

Synchronicity takes the coincidence of events in time and space as meaning something more than mere chance, namely, a peculiar interdependence of objective events among themselves as well as with the subjective (psychic) states of the observer or observers. (p. iv)

Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen (1979), in her book, The Tao of Psychology, captures the feeling of a Khidr experience in her description of a synchronistic event.

To fully appreciate what a synchronistic event is, one may need to personally experience an uncanny coincidence and feel a spontaneous emotional response-- of chills up the spine, or awe, or warmth--feelings that often

accompany synchronicity. Ideally, there should be no way to account for the coincidence by pure chance. (p. 17)

The principle of synchronicity is related to the idea of simultaneity. Aziz (1990) explains that synchronicity is “associated with archetypal processes in nature, which constitute a psychophysical space-time continuum” (p. 71). In the archetypal world, “knowledge (meaning) finds itself in a space-time continuum in which space is no longer space nor time, time” (Jung, 1952/1981, p. 481). An example from research on Khidr is Ibn ‘Arabi’s account of simultaneous knowing. Ibn ‘Arabi has just returned to Tunis from Seville, a 3-month caravan journey. He has had an amazing encounter. During his visit in Tunis he had composed a poem of which he had told no one else. “A complete stranger came to me and recited, word for word, the poem I had composed, although I had not written it out for anyone” (Ibn ‘Arabi, 1988, p. 28). Disconcerted and sensing a shifting of his perception of reality, Ibn ‘Arabi asked the stranger who had composed the lines. The reply was even more unsettling. The unknown man replied that they were by Muhammed Ibn ‘Arabi. But how could he have known them?

Then I asked him when he had learned them and he mentioned the very day on which I had composed them, despite the great distance. I then asked him who had recited them to him for him to learn. He said, “One night I was sitting at a session of the brethren in the eastern part of Seville, when a stranger who looked like a mendicant came and sat with us. After conversing with us he recite the lines to us. We liked them so much we wrote them down and asked him who had composed them. He said they were being composed by Ibn al-‘Arabi in the oratory of Ibn Muthanna. We told him we had never heard of such a place in our country. He replied that it was in Tunis and that the lines had just been composed there” (Ibn ‘Arabi, 1988, p. 28).

Time and space have lost their ordinary meaning in this experience. This is an extremely important piece of information. This liminality along with simultaneous knowing is indicative of a Khidr encounter. Jung observed that spontaneous

synchronistic phenomena might be shown to have “a direct connection with an archetype. This, in itself is an irrepresentable, psychoid factor of the collective unconscious” (1952/1981, p. 481).

A strange event occurred when Jung was in session with a young woman patient. Jung (1952/1981) writes, “this was an extraordinarily difficult case to treat.... the difficulty lay in the fact that she always knew better about everything” (p. 438). A one-sided attitude exists, suggesting an inflated ego and a rigid animus not unlike the character of Moses in the Khidr story. This well-educated woman possesses a “highly polished Cartesian rationalism with an impeccably ‘geometrical’ idea of reality” (p. 525). Jung states that he was not making any progress, and “Evidently something quite irrational was needed which was beyond my powers to produce” (p. 525). Jung surrenders his own analytical skills to intuition and an unknown “Third.” Jung realizes that he must confine himself to “the hope that something unexpected and irrational would turn up, something that would burst the intellectual retort into which she had sealed herself” (p. 525).

One day the young woman reports that the night before her session with Jung, she had had an impressive dream in which

someone had given her a golden scarab--a costly piece of jewelry. While she was still telling me this dream, I heard something behind me gently tapping on the window. I turned round and saw that it was a fairly large flying insect that was knocking against the windowpane from outside in the obvious effort to get into the dark room. This seemed to me very strange. I opened the window immediately and caught the insect in the air as it flew in. It was a scarabaeid beetle or common rose-chafer (*Cetonia aurata*) whose gold-green colour most nearly resembles that of a golden scarab. I handed the beetle to my patient with the words “Here is your scarab.” This punctured the desired hole in the ice of her intellectual resistance. The treatment could now be continued with satisfactory results. (1952/1981, p. 526)

Jung relates this story as an example of meaningful coincidence, or synchronicity. It is important to include this event for an understanding of the Khidr encounter because it deals with the unexpected, meaning, synchronicity, and a shift in psychological perspective. If we look deeply into this incident, the presence of Khidr is remarkably evident. The transformation of the young woman began with the appearance of a scarab, notable for its green-gold color, the color known to the alchemists as veriditas (greenness). “Khidr,” we recall, is the Arabic word for “green.”

After the stage of melanosis (blackening), or nigredo, the veriditas sometimes appeared in exceptional cases. The veriditas was never generally recognized, in the same manner as the xanthosis (yellowing), or citrinitas, which were also rarely mentioned (Begg, 1985, p. 144). One might be reminded of the elusive, pale green band of light sometimes observed in the sky at just the right moment of sunset. The alchemists observed a stage in the opus, which they called variously the “leprosy of metals or the blessed greenness” (p. 144). This stage occurs “after an individual had poured his or her energies outwards into the world” (as in Moses’ loss of libidinal energy) at “a point in which the thirst for a new source of meaning begins to make itself felt” (p. 144).

Another mention of the unusual color called veriditas is made in reference to the otherworldly figure Jung saw at the foot of his bed. In 1939, at the time when Jung was occupied with a seminar on the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, and with his work, Psychology and Alchemy, he awoke to see the figure of Christ on the Cross. “His body was made of greenish-gold” (Jung, 1961/1973, p. 210). Jung realized that his vision pointed to “the central alchemical symbol” of the alchemists’, “the aurum non vulgi and the veriditas” (p. 210). “The green-gold is the living quality

which the alchemists saw not only in man but in inorganic nature.” It is an expression of the life-spirit, of the anima mundi, of the filius macrocosmi, and of the Anthropos who animates the whole cosmos” (p. 211). Jung goes on to state that if he had not been so struck by the greenish-gold, he would not have seen “the undisguised alchemical conception of Christ as a union of spiritually alive and physically dead matter” (p. 211).

The beetle tapping at Jung’s window is identified as Switzerland’s closest insect relative of the Egyptian scarab. The scarab is a classic example of a re-birth symbol, and we recall that Jung analyses Sura 18 as a re-birth mystery. “Any essential change of attitude signifies a psychic renewal, which is usually accompanied by symbols of rebirth in the patient’s dreams and fantasies” (Jung, 1952/1981, p. 525).

The ancient Egyptian Book of What Is in the Netherworld describes how the dead sun-god changes himself at the tenth station into Khepri, the scarab, and then, at the twelfth station, mounts the barge which carries the rejuvenated sun-god into the morning sky” (Jung, 1952/1981, p. 525).

A mandala drawn by another of Jung’s patients contains “a creature like a beetle, representing an unconscious content, and comparable with the sun in the form of Khepera” (Jung, 1950/1980a, p. 367). The name “Khepri” and Khepera sound suspiciously like “Khidr.”

The lintels of the door leading into the tombs of Egypt’s Pharaoh Seti I, a location of the threshold between death and life, display a symbol that whispers the Khidr myth. There is a golden image of the sun disk, the image of the rebirth cycle and the sun god, and within this is the beetle Kheperi. The dung beetle rolls the sun across the sky every day, and was believed to be symbolic of transformation and resurrection in ancient Egypt (Ellis, 1998, p. 7). The geographical origin of the

myths of Khepri, Khepera, and Khidr, and the birthplace of alchemy in the Middle East suggest that a connection might exist, at least in the transpersonal realm.

Jung and Khidr

Jung was the first Westerner to analyze the cryptic Middle Eastern myth of Khidr from a depth psychological perspective. He proposes that Sura 18 contains three mythic aspects, (1) a rebirth mystery (1939/1944, p. 1), (2) a hero's journey and a sun god myth (1916/1956), (3) a symbolic representation of the individuation process.

Jung provides us with copious, rich insights into the Khidr myth, so it will not be the task of this study to re-interpret the myth from a Jungian perspective. Rather, I will present here Jung's understanding of the topic and proceed with development of this topic, continuing the hermeneutic from the point where Jung left off. This endeavor will include a discussion of the metaphorical alchemical paradigm as a way of understanding this mythologem.

Jung (1939/1944, p. 1) acknowledges that his work in the area of the Khidr myth is less than comprehensive. In none of his published writings is there a detailed analysis of the myth's adherence to the alchemical paradigm, nor does he give any attention to the interpretation of the three acts of Khidr. Indeed, in a 1939 lecture to the Zurich Analytical Psychology Society, Jung presents his most comprehensive piece on Khidr, "The Different Aspects of Rebirth," with a caution. He forewarns us that this discussion is "not intended to be more than a survey of a field of knowledge which is far too broad to be adequately treated in the framework of a lecture" (Spring, 1939/1944, p.1).

For a period of over 40 years, beginning in 1916, the name of Khidr appears unexpectedly, like a flashback of a recurrent dream, in Jung's writings. One might speculate on how Jung came across the Khidr myth. His interest in obscure information in religious and mythology coupled with turn of the century Europe's great interest in the Middle East made it the right time, the kairos for the connection.

In 1939, Jung presented a paper at the Eranos Conference which contained the seeds of his later thought on the nature of archetypes using as an example the Islamic mythological personage known as al-Khidr. At this time, Jung, along with Louis Massignon and Henri Corbin, contributed to bringing the mysterious world of Islamic theology and mythology to the attention of the great writers and thinkers attending the conferences at Ascanos. Jung developed this theme in an article in Spring (1939/1944), in a letter to Pere Bruno (1953/1979) and a later, more refined essay "Concerning Rebirth"(1959/1980).

The first time the name of Khidr appears in Jung's writing is in the "Origin of the Hero" (1916/1956). In this extensive analysis of Miss Miller's phantasies, in particular the third creation, written in 1902, is a hypnagogic poem she calls "Chiwantopel" (p. 191), Jung is able to amplify an association of Miss Miller's "Ahasver," to introduce the Khidr myth (p. 193).

Jung regards the entire chapter of the Cave, Sura 18, as a rebirth mystery. The stranger with the soul-shaking wisdom appears when there is a lowering of the conscious threshold. In crisis, fragmentation of ego defenses, and in times of imbalance from ego-inflation, the encounter is suddenly realized. The phenomenon is unexpected, unforgettable. It makes repressed contents conscious, and resulting in a psychological transformation or rebirth. Jung knew whereof he spoke. His personal explorations into the unconscious included his emotional breakdown in 1917, during

which he received his most creative inspiration, and again in 1939/1944 when he nearly died from an illness and “had a new birth, so to speak” (Edinger, 1996, p. 11).

Jung’s own “experiment with the unconscious,” conducted between 1914 and 1918 in neutral Switzerland, was later validated and interpreted in the light of his expeditions to the Elgoni in East Africa and the Indians of New Mexico.

These researches confirmed for him the validity of three crucial hypotheses: (1) that the psyche is the primary datum--not only of psychology but of our lives, (2) that it is objective inasmuch as we do not construct our psyche or will it into being: it exists *a priori*, a product of nature, or evolution; and (3) that the basic unit of the objective psyche is the archetype--the archetype of the collective unconscious. It choreographs the basic patterns we dance to throughout life. (Stevens, 1993, p. 10)

Jung’s journey was as compelling as Moses’ in Sura 18, ready to pursue his goal to “not stop until he is eighty and more years old,” to go where the two seas of consciousness and unconsciousness meet, in order to find a new way of living and understanding.

Did Jung encounter Khidr? Jung’s autobiography, Memories Dreams Reflections (1961/1973) gives us some suggestions about that. In his descent into the unconscious in Advent of 1913, Jung encountered a Wise Old Man who guided him through the underworld, much like Dante’s Virgil in the Divine Comedy. The robed, bearded sage was none other than the prophet Elijah, so Jung was told, and Elijah is a close companion of Khidr and frequently identified with the Islamic saint. Jung painted a remarkable picture of a winged, kingfisher-like Elijah. Later, the image changed to become Philemon. Jung’s quest, his hero’s journey was to intent in finding answers that would give meaning to life and suffering.

The letting go of the rational mind is in effect a journey into the wilderness. “Should one maintain oneself on the threshold between day consciousness and sleep,

image formations will project on the screen of the psyche expressing our attunements of moods, perhaps even premonitions and misgivings in a pictorial form" (Khan, quoted in Spiegelman, 1991, p. 51). Jung calls this process "active imagination." Jung's drop into the unconscious parallels other voluntary soul-descents, including Faust's descent to the realm of the Mothers, and Orpheus' descent into the Underworld. For the Sufis this conscious descent is known as wandering in a landscape of the soul, much as the prisoner in the desert who follows the purple archangel to the spring of life beyond Mount Khaf in Surhwardi's tale (Corbin, 1972). Beyond the sacred mountain is the place where Khidr is encountered.

The following is an example of Jung's relationship to his unconscious that connects him to an ancient European myth of another Green-clad immortal being. The night before his mother's death, Jung had a "frightening dream":

In a dense, gloomy forest, a heroic, primeval landscapes, a gigantic wolfhound with a fearful gaping maw burst forth. At the sight of it, the blood froze in my veins. It tore past me and suddenly I knew: the Wild Huntsman had commanded it to carry away a human soul. The next morning I received news of my mother's passing. Seldom has a dream so shaken me, for upon superficial consideration it seemed to say that the devil had fetched her. But to be accurate the dream said that it was the Wild Huntsman, the "Grunhuetl," or Wearer of the Green Hat, who hunted with his wolves that night--it was the season of Fohn storms in January. It was Wotan--god of my Alemannic forefathers, who had gathered my mother to her ancestors--negatively to the "wild horde," but positively to the "salig lüt," the blessed folk. It was the Christian missionaries who made Wotan into a devil. In himself he is an important god--a Mercury or Hermes, as the Romans correctly realized, a nature spirit who returned to life again in the Merlin of the Grail legend and became, as the spiritus Mercurius, the sought-after arcanum of the alchemists. Thus the dream says that the soul of my mother was taken into that greater territory of the self which lies beyond the segment of Christian morality, taken into that wholeness of nature and spirit in which conflicts and contradictions are resolved. (1961/1973, p. 313)

Jung proposes that the character of the Self as a personality stands out with particular distinctness in the legend of Khidr. The term “the Self” is understood by Jung (1939/1944) as “a psychical whole and at the same time a centre, neither of which coincides with the ego, but includes it, just as a larger circle encloses a smaller one” (p. 21). Jung (1958/1978) explains that what he calls the self is the “‘mediating’ or ‘uniting’ symbol” which “necessarily proceeds from a sufficiently great tension of opposites” (p. 104). He continues to explain that his use of the term ‘self’ is to avoid dubious incursions into metaphysics where he would trespass upon all manner of religious convictions. “Living in the West, I would have to say Christ instead of ‘self,’ in the Near East, it would be Khidr, in the Far East, Atman, or Tao, or the Buddha, in the Far West maybe a hare or Mondamin, and in cabalism it would be Tifereth” (1958/1978, p. 104). This most succinct statement that Jung made about Khidr indicates the significance of this figure as an archetype, bearing in mind that any archetype is a deity at the core.

The concept of Khidr as Self is specifically Jung’s contribution (1939/1944, p. 22). It bears out with the examination of non-Qur’anic tales of Khidr, but Islam has a different opinion. In many parts of the Islamic world, the actual encounter has unquestionable reality, and there is no understanding of Khidr as a god, but more as a man befriended by Allah, therefore worthy of honor. Jung tells of the Somali headman of the safari who impressed the Jung with his belief in Khidr as a living person:

He assured me that I might at any time meet Khidr, because I was, as he put it, a M’tu-ya-kitabu, a ‘man of the book,’ that is, the Qur’an. He assured me that I might meet Khidr in the street in the shape of a man; or he might appear to me during the night as a pure white light; or-he smilingly picked a blade of grass-the verdant one might even look like that.

He said he himself had once been comforted and helped by Khidr, when he could not find a job after the war and was suffering want. One night, while he slept, he dreamt he saw a bright white light near the door and he knew it was Khidr. Quickly leaping to his feet (in his dream), he reverentially saluted him with the words Salaam aleikum (Peace be with you); and then he knew, he said, that now his wish would be fulfilled. He added that a few days later, the post as headman of a safari was offered to him by a firm of outfitters in Nairobi. (p. 22)

It is interesting to note that this tale of Khidr's effect on a man's perspective is so immediate and profound, even though there is no significant interaction other than a dream of a quasi-appearance. The presence of Khidr is reverently acknowledged and emotionally responded to. Hillman's (1975) lamentation comes to mind, to the effect that modern cultures do not acknowledge the presence of the gods, so that the deities must force themselves into our awareness as our psychopathologies. The shift in the headman's consciousness is dramatic, and there is no question in his mind what has occurred. Life improves thereafter. There is no discounting what the psyche has revealed in a dream, or what the proper emotional and behavioral response must be. Spirit and instinct are united for the Somali as they are in Jung's deepened trust of his own unconscious contents.

Jung's Hermeneutic of Sura 18

Rebirth is the theme of the whole of the 18th Sura, according to Jung (1939/1944). Jung's most comprehensive writing on Khidr, "Concerning Rebirth" (1959/1980) places the "friend of god" squarely in a discussion of symbols of transformation. Renewal and rebirth are other words for transformation. Jung uses these words to describe the entire eighteenth chapter of the Qur'an, The Cave, as a rebirth mystery. There are three parts to the myth. The prologue, which is the Cave

of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, followed by the story of Moses and his servant Joshua ben Nun, which is in fact “an amplification and elucidation of the legend of the legend of the Seven Sleepers and the problem of rebirth” (Jung, 1939/1944, p. 19). The third part is the story of Dhu’lQarnayn, believed to be Alexander the Great.

The short tale of the story of the Cave of the Seven Sleepers is a reference to the “place of the mystery of rebirth; it is that hidden hollow space in which one is confined in order to be incubated and renewed” (Jung, 1939/1944, p. 16). When the sleepers awoke, they had slept 309 years, a prolongation of life “verging on immortality.” Psychologically, this aspect of the Sura “is to be taken as a projection” (Jung, 1939/1944, p. 16). Jung states that if anyone enters that cave, “--the cave, that is to say, which everyone carries within himself, or the darkness that is at the back of his consciousness-something of which he is unconscious happens to him, which is tantamount to his being reborn as an immortal” (p. 16). This darkness hints of the strangeness and consternation associated with meeting Khidr. It refers to something real and psychological happening to a person. It is an event such as an encounter with something or someone from the dark cave of the unconscious.

Legend states that Khidr was born in a cave, in the darkness, thus the unconscious. “Khidr is dismembered on the Last day by the Antichrist, like Osiris” according to Jung, who draws his information from Vollers. This information did not appear anywhere else in the research, but it is consistent with parallels found in the Osiris myth, the Dionysian cult, and the Christ story. The fish is indeed reanimated. If the salted, roasted fish is, as Jung suggests, Khidr, then the ‘Verdant One’ is also able to regenerate himself and be transformed.

Khidr is associated with the sun god, the myth of the Hero, and the incest problem in his work with Miss Miller’s “Chiwantopel” phantasy (Jung, 1916/1956. p.

199). The myth of the hero, as it appears to Jung, is the myth of our “suffering unconscious” (p. 199). The myth expresses “an unquenchable longing for all the deepest sources of our own being; for the body of the mother, and through it communion with life in the countless forms of existence” (p. 199). This realization is where Jung moves beyond the confines of Freudian analysis and the focus on instinct and sexual drive as the human race’s sole raison d’être. Given that dream symbols may be reduced to sexual objects, the libido expressed as sexuality may also be symbolic in and of itself. The Holy Grail, the Cup, the water bowl of Khidr is the container of the water of life, life as Eros, the aqua permanens and immortality that sex and procreation represent.

It may be suggested that Jung’s fascination with mythology and religion, his frustration with the relationship and theology of his minister father, play a part in Jung’s personal relationship to the Khidr myth. In addition, his training as a psychiatrist, and in particular, his years of study with Freud and subsequent, painful breaking away from the Viennese school of psychoanalysis, drew him to the conclusions he made about this myth. There was a loss of the guiding male archetype, the positive father figure to Jung’s childhood self. Interpretation of the Khidr myth emerges from Jung’s period of mental disturbance as well as his daring exploration of his personal unconscious. The Wise Old Man archetype, the figures of Elijah and Philemon, were guiding images for Jung, perhaps an expression of his childhood wound of having an emotionally distant father and of his later disappointment with Freud as father figure and mentor. The analysis of Miss Miller’s phantasies is a statement of Jung’s movement away from Freudian theory, and his working out of an understanding of his own personal complexes.

“The cave is the place of rebirth, that secret cavity in which one shut up in order to be incubated and renewed” (Jung, 1916/1956, p. 135). Jung re-worked this idea from 1916 on. The cave is important in our discussion of liminal space and time. Jung (1961/1973, p. 289) writes that a shift in attitude occurred for him as a result of his serious illness in 1939/1944. A fruitful period of work began with a new insight, “an affirmation of things as they are” (p. 297). The new perspective was essentially Khidr’s teaching to Moses in Sura 18, “an unconditional ‘yes’ to that which is, without subjective protests - acceptance of my own nature, as I happen to be” (p. 297). The sense of the journey of individuation as a risky, perilous venture without guarantee or security is clear. Jung had thought that something was wrong with his attitude, and that was why he had become ill, much in the way of viewing illness expressed by Bernie Segal and Louise Hay. When one follows the path of individuation there is risk involved, one makes mistakes; “life would not be complete without them” (1961/1973, p. 297).

The quest is about staying focused on the goal. In the Khidr myth, the conscious goals are immortality and wisdom of a higher nature, the unconscious goal is individuation. The road is not a sure one, but if it were, Jung (1961/1973) asserts that if we think there is a sure road, “that would be the road of death” (p. 297). The importance of affirming one’s own destiny became clear to Jung after this illness.

In this way we forge an ego that does not break down when incomprehensible things happen; an ego that endures, endures the truth, and that is capable of coping with the world and with fate. Then, to experience defeat is also to experience victory. Nothing is disturbed--neither inwardly nor outwardly. (p. 297)

Here Jung addresses the goal of the quest, the desire for eternal life that fired the heroes of our mythical journey, Moses, Alexander, and Gilgamesh. In this

ego-acceptance of whatever horrors and suffering and defeat occur in life, victory is also experienced, “for one’s own continuity has withstood the current of life and of time. But that can come to pass only when one does not meddle inquisitively with the workings of fate” (1961/1973, p. 297). In this context, we may interpret fate as Khidr’s enigmatic behavior, which is not to be questioned.

Mutual Transformation

I propose that it is not just Moses who is transformed, but also the fish, who later becomes Khidr, the Self that is affected by the encounter. This reflects Jung’s concept of the mutuality of transformation of both analyst and client in the psychological transference. In this context, the archetypal myth of encounter with the Knowing One, there are implications on a collective and theological level as well. Jung’s understanding of the Self is similar to the way many religions speak of God.

In Answer to Job, Jung’s (1952/1967) controversial essay on the problem of suffering and evil, Job proves himself to be loyal, steadfast, and patient, qualities which the hitherto unconscious, narcissistic, impatient, and rageful Yahweh had not yet developed in his divine being. There is a hadith, a traditional teaching in Islam which parallels this line of thought. It quotes the Prophet Mohammed speaking in his revelation for Allah; “I was a Hidden Treasure, and I wanted to be known. So I created the world so that I might be known” (Haule, 1990, p. 212). As with Job, “God’s nature cannot become public property and remain hidden from himself alone. Whoever knows God has an effect on him” (Jung, 1952/1967, p. 64). This suggests the idea of God needing man, so that both may grow and become more conscious within the relationship. In psychological terms Edinger describes this as personal

growth along the ego-Self axis (Edinger, 1972). "If Job gains personal knowledge of God, then God must also learn to know himself" (Jung, 1952/1967, p. 64).

God causes mighty suffering to come down on his loyal servant Job, because of a bet with Satan. Job reacts with remarkable self-discipline to the divinely imposed suffering. "At one moment Yahweh behaves as irrationally as a cataclysm; the next moment he wants to be loved, honoured, worshipped, and praised as just" (Jung, 1952/1967, p. 53). The shocking and amoral actions perpetrated by Khidr in front of Moses are the cause of unjust suffering, and Moses is explicitly required to observe unquestioningly in silence. God's brutal power and unthinking amoral force in his treatment of Job "unwittingly raises Job by humiliating him in the dust" (p. 54). But wait, there is more happening here, for according to Jung, "Yahweh's dual nature has been revealed, and somebody or something has seen and registered this fact. Such a revelation, whether it reached man's consciousness or not, could not have failed to have far-reaching consequences" (p. 55).

The concept that God could need man, or could be changed by a relationship with the humans he created, is implied in Answer to Job. Job has come to know something about his God, that his "just" God is capable of acts of injustice and lack of compassion. Somehow in the divine scheme of things God needs to practice some self-reflection, and it seems that mankind provides the mirror for the holy countenance. I am reminded of an image in a dream that occurred during the research and reading Answer to Job. There was a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, and the group went outside together. Three of the members struggled to hold a large flat object up. I went up and without a second thought, joined the three and took hold of the fourth corner of the object. With my help, it was balanced so that he could see that it was a large mirror that was now facing the heavens. The four together made it

possible for the “Higher Power” to gaze down at his reflection in the mirror held by his mirror-image creations.

This dream reveals an inner and outer movement towards wholeness, symbolized in the conscious choice to join the three men and help to balance the mirror. This act creates a quaternity, the numerical symbol of wholeness. Most striking is the mirror reflecting the heavenly deity’s face. This image symbolizes the connection on the ego-Self axis, as the mutuality between God and man in the same way as the story of Job as Jung interprets it. “For, if Job gains knowledge of God, then God must also learn to know himself.

Whoever knows God has an affect on him. The failure of the attempt to corrupt Job has changed Yahweh’s nature” (Jung, 1952/1967, p. 64). Jung says that it is obvious that Job’s action of standing morally higher than God causes God to need to raise his level of consciousness. God “has to catch up and become human himself” (p. 88). Job’s elevation is the immediate cause of the Incarnation, and “its purpose is the differentiation of Yahweh’s consciousness” (p. 90). “God needs our poor heart, says Angelus Silesius, in order to be real” (Von Franz, 1980, p. 155).

May we then infer that Khidr is changed by his encounter with Moses? Jung seems to think so. His interpretation of Sura 18 describes a mystery legend given as a transformation happening to the “other” Jung also suggests that the Qur’an makes no distinction between Khidr and Allah, indicating that the former is an “incarnation,” so to speak, of the latter (Spiegelman, 1991, p. 15). In the third part of the Sura, the story of Dhu’lQarnayn, Jung sees the hero (Moses, or Alexander the Great, the “Two Horned”) telling the story as if about someone other than himself. “This is a way to avoid inflation, the great psychic danger when one encounters the Self” (Spiegelman, 1991, p. 15). The ego is identical with the Self to the extent that it is the instrument

of self-realization for the self. Only an egotistical, inflated ego is in opposition to the Self.

This story is about making conscious the unconscious. The Khidr figure met by Moses, when seen on a depth-psychological level, is an unknown projected part of self that is so repressed so as to seem totally “Other.” This is the operation of the Self as an organizing principle of the Psyche. The phenomenon of psychological projection is clarified in the section that follows.

Projection

Jung (1954/1969) defines projection as an unconscious; that is, unperceived and unintentional transfer of subjective, psychic elements on to an outer object (p. 137). He says, “In the darkness of anything external to me, I find, without recognizing it as such, an interior or psychic life that is my own” (1952/1977, p. 245).

The experience of encounter and transformation, when interpreted as the phenomena of projection, withdrawal of projection and integration becomes easier to understand as transference. Jung used Freud’s concept of psychological transference in developing the theory of analytic psychology. The concept of the transference was first described by Freud to express “the emotional involvement often occurring between patient and doctor in a psychotherapeutic relationship” (Edinger, 1957, p. 32). As each encounter solicits us, lifts us up from our “unconscious nuclearity” and shows an aspect of our self to the I and thus reveals some feature of our sensibility, (Bollas, 1992, p. 29). Freud in his reductive theory, considered the transference to be “a reliving of regressive infantile patterns of behavior within the therapeutic relationship” (p. 3).

Jungian Edward Edinger (1957) suggests that the neutral term “transference” is not adequate to describe this phenomenon, which “has essentially the same meaning as projection, in fact, the transference is a particularly intense manifestation of projection” (p. 32). In its broadest sense, the transference includes all experience involving psychological projection (p. 32). What is missing in reductive theories is awareness of the archetypal, projective nature of transference and its “transformative potentialities.” “Reductive psychotherapists see only the external, interpersonal manifestation of the transference with all of its infantile characteristics” (p. 33). The basic content of the positive transference is healthy libido - the capacity to experience life intensely and to relate to other people” (p. 34).

The image of Khidr is met in real and visionary encounters. He is experienced outwardly as a stranger, and inwardly as one who carries tremendous meaning for one’s life. Faust longed for transcendent meaning in life and encountered Mephistopheles. Rumi was thrown out of his scholarly persona by the appearance of a disheveled madman of the name of Shams. Mary Oliver wrote of seeing a stranger who passes on down the airplane’s aisle, leaving her with the knowledge that she will never be the same. In additions, the transcendent Other is the substance that evokes the feeling of numinous significance. As we have seen, the myth of Khidr may be interpreted as the Moses-ego projecting the Self, outward onto the stranger, Khidr. The journey with Khidr is a tale of re-collection of projected contents in the service of individuation and becoming whole.

The concept of projecting and then withdrawing our psychic fragments is described in Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz’s Projection and Re-Collection in Jungian Psychology (1980). There are five stages to this process as interpreted and presented by Hollis (1998, pp. 51-53).

First, a person is convinced that his or her inner experience is truly “outer,” for it is experienced “out there.” This is Moses’ coming upon the stranger on the rock, identifying him as the one whom he has been seeking, and asking to accompany him.

The second stage arises out of the gradual perception of discrepancy, the widening gulf between who the Other is supposed to be and our concrete experience. Moses is shocked and confused by the actions of this man who is supposed to be the wisest, teaching Moses the right way to live. “Niggling questions grow into large doubts. Doubts lead to consternation” (Hollis, 1988, p. 51). The loss of a projection is painful. Moses experiences anxiety and discomfort with Khidr’s behavior.

The third stage of the projective process obliges the assessment of this new perception of the Other. What is going on and who is this person I am with, really? Moses is moved by his emotions and discomfort to break the agreement he made earlier, not to question Khidr. He begins to question and critique Khidr’s actions.

The fourth stage leads one to recognize that what one perceived was not actually real, that one was not experiencing the Other. Moses is given reasons for Khidr’s actions that throws new light onto the situation. Khidr is not all-powerful nor is he all evil. The moment of separation has come. The stranger goes on his way without Moses. With the loss of the Other, the task is to become conscious. Moses is left with new understanding.

The fifth stage requires the search for the origin of that projected energy within oneself. This is to ask for the meaning of the projection. Since projections are by definition originally unconscious, we can only withdraw them when we have sustained the suffering of discrepancy. The ego recognizes its own power and wisdom, its capacity for good and evil, and that it is also not the Self. Moses is able

to go on alone. He integrates the experience of Khidr. How can this be? In the following section of Sura 18, the leader is wise and creative, using his wisdom and skills for the collective.

If in fact Jung is correct in interpreting Dhu'lQarnayn as Moses, then Moses has successfully integrated his projection of Khidr as one taught directly by the divine. Moses has accessed his inner wisdom and a direct connection to the Self. In considering the examples given of encounter with an archetypal figure such as Khidr, I believe we should keep in mind the numinous nature of the experience. "The personal and transpersonal are inextricably connected within the human psyche," says Corbett (1996, p. 53). Thus, "it would be a mistake to talk about the experience of the divine as a projection" (p. 53). "The term [projection] implies a concrete distinction between inner and outer reality, whereas the divine is as much within the psyche as without" (p. 53).

Jung carved the following words in Latin from an alchemical text onto the third face of the Bollingen Stone (1961/1973, p. 228).

I am an orphan, nevertheless I am found everywhere. I am one, but opposed to myself. I am youth and old man at one and the same time. I have I have known neither mother nor father, because I have had to be fetched out of the deep like a fish, or fell like a white stone from heaven. In woods and mountains I roam, but I am hidden in the innermost soul of man. I am mortal for everyone, yet I am not touched by the cycle of seasons.

It is not difficult to see the characteristics of Khidr in these lines. He is the mysterious immortal, not touched by the seasons, roaming everywhere, the ubiquitous senex and puer, the fish from the depths of the unconscious, and the stone, the lapis of the alchemists. In a quiet wooded grove on the shore of Lake Zurich, the Bollingen stone stands today, just outside Jung's Tower, and is like an explanation of

it. It is a manifestation of the occupant, but one that perplexes the reader in a Khidr-like sense. The words echo the medieval verse of Talesin:

I was with my Lord in the highest sphere,
On the fall of Lucifer in the depth of hell,
I have born a banner before Alexander-
I was in court of on before the birth of Gwydion-
I was at the place of crucifixion of the merciful Son of God,
I have been three periods in the prison of Arianrod-
I am able to instruct the whole universe.
I shall be until the day of doom on the face of the earth;
And it is not known whether my body is flesh or fish.

The Book of Talesin (Evans, ed. 1910, quoted in Hobson, p. 21)

The Talesin verse is cryptic and full of Middle Eastern imagery. The reference to Alexander the Great recalls the Khidr legend. This Talesin is also ageless, present always, and is the messenger of great wisdom. Once again the reference is heard to the fish and the ambiguity of who this figure really is.

Jung wrote, "Do you know what I wanted to carve into the back face of the stone? Le cri de Merlin! For what the stone expressed reminded me of Merlin's life in the forest, after he had vanished from the world. Men still hear his cries, so the legend runs, but they cannot understand or interpret them" (1961/1973, p. 228).

This is about incomprehension of the Other, or an archetypal figure such as Khidr, just as Moses could not begin to comprehend the actions of Khidr. The anxiety and ability to tolerate patiently actions that cry out of their unspeakable injustice, deeds without meaning given, so Merlin's cries are still awaiting interpretation. Is that perhaps why Jung did not put the words on the stones? It was too intolerable, or it would have been too close to the unconscious?

Merlin represents an attempt by the medieval unconscious to create a parallel figure to Parsifal. Parsifal is a Christian hero, and Merlin, son of the devil and a pure

virgin, is his dark brother. In the 12th century, when the legend arose, there were as yet no premises by which his intrinsic meaning could be understood. Hence he ended in exile, and hence “le cri de Merlin,” which still sounded from the forest after his death. The cry that no one could understand implies that he lives on in unredeemed form. His story is not yet finished, and, like Khidr, his image is that of the eternal wanderer.

It is said of Merlin “he still walks abroad”(Jung, 1961/1973, p. 228). It might be said that, “the secret of Merlin was carried on by alchemy, primarily in the figure of Mercurius. Then Merlin was taken up again in my psychology of the unconscious and--remains uncomprehended to this day! That is because most people find it quite beyond them to live on close terms with the unconscious” (p. 228). This discomfort with the unconscious parallels the experience of Khidr, of walking with the numinous who is for all human comprehension.

Jung refers to alchemy in his analysis of Sura 18, but does not go into that metaphor for psychological transformation in depth. He alludes to a fear of flooding of the unconscious in proximity to numinous contents such as the Self or an archetypal form. In the next section I will examine the Khidr myth as if it were a secret alchemical parable that contains information waiting to be recognized. A brief background on alchemy as it was practiced before Jung’s re-envisioning of it as a psychological paradigm follows.

Alchemy

In this section I will undertake an examination the Khidr myth as if it were a secret alchemical parable that contains information waiting to be recognized. A brief

background on alchemy as it was practiced before Jung's re-envisioning of it as a psychological paradigm follows.

Alchemy was founded on the belief that all metals were basically the same and that it was possible to transmute one to another. Further, it was believed that gold was the purest form of metal and that some substance exists which could transform baser metals into gold. Given that fact that we are studying an Arabic myth, it is interesting that the sciences of chemistry and alchemy took great strides in Moslem lands during the 9th and 10th centuries CE. Even the word affirms the Arabic origin of that science. The Arabic term is al-kimiya, which was probably derived from an ancient Egyptian word for "black." Even in antiquity the science had a reputation as "black magic" (Fisher, 1964, p. 118).

Alchemy was a secret doctrine practiced in the Middle Ages by adepts such as Paracelsus, who used the art for philosophical purposes as well as pharmaceuticals. "With the triumph of Christianity under Constantine the old pagan ideas did not vanish but lived on in the strange arcane terminology of philosophical alchemy," according to Jung (1942/1983, p. 122). The operation consisted of separation of the prima materia, the "so-called chaos, into the active principle, the soul, and the passive principle, the body, which were then reunited in personified form in the coniunctio or 'chymical marriage'" (p. 122). The coniunctio was allegorized as the coming together of two polar opposites, a symbolic marriage, hierogamos, portrayed as a king and queen, sun and moon or as in the Lambsprink drawings, father and son. Most significant for our study of Khidr is the personage of Mercurius, as the alchemists knew him. Mercurius was the "son of wisdom," the filius sapientiae or filius philosophorum who sprang from the union of the hierogamos (p. 123). The chief

figure of the alchemical operation was “Hermes or Mercurius in his dual significance of quicksilver and world soul” (p. 122).

A text from 1659 describes Mercurius as “he runs round the earth and enjoys equally the company of the good and the wicked” suggestive of Khidr as the eternal traveler who is “jenseits von gut und boese” (Jung, 1948/1983, p. 217). It is Mercurius whom we shall consider as a carrier of paradox and transformation to a psychological situation of the type Moses finds himself in with Khidr. Mercurius is the one with divine knowledge, like Khidr. “As the divinus temarius, Mercurius is the revealer of divine secrets,” “the messenger of the gods” (Jung, 1948/1983, p. 230). Alchemy was developed as a science within the Islamic heart of Arabic culture. The connection of the alchemical metaphor appears in the stages of Moses’ experience with Khidr of dark confusion, and humbling, as the nigredo and mortificatio.

Jung (1939/1944) refers to alchemy in his analysis of Sura 18, but does not develop that comparison extensively. He draws a few parallels, including the symbols of the fish, the water, and the separation of opposites in the eschatological battle of light and darkness in the final section on Dhu’lQarnayn. The fish that Moses’ servant lost is a strange creature, able to swim away though already cooked. Jung recalls the strange fish of the alchemists, the “round fish lacking bones and skin” which symbolizes the “round element,” the germ of the animate stone, of the filius philosophorum. (p. 20). “Nun,” we might note is a name associated with the word for fish.

The fish, a creature which lives in the unconscious is a multivalent symbol for many concepts, including the alchemical round, eyeless fish that is the sought-for Philosopher’s Stone. The fish is a symbol of consciousness within the unconsciousness symbolized by water consciousness and then Jung’s Aion

(1950/1978), the astrological assimilation of Christ as fish. We recall that the words “Jesus Christ, Son of God” form the anagram word ichthys meaning “fish” in Greek. This humble yet powerful symbol thus becomes the pivotal indicator of Moses’ goal.

Two fishes symbolize the astrological age of Pisces, a concept of duality interpreted psychologically by Jung in Aion (1950/1978). Two fishes are seen in the fountain where Khidr and Elijah are seated in the Persian illustration in Corbin’s book (1955/1969). In the alchemical Book of Lambsprinck, a picture of two opposed fishes is intended to convey the secret of the opposites (Edinger, 1996). What we find relevant here is the double, paradoxical nature of the fish, hinting at the duality of the Moses-Khidr pair.

On the Pairs of Opposites.

The pairing of Khidr and Elijah is an important aspect of Jung’s psychological and alchemical interpretation of the mythologem. On the archetypal Pair of Friends, Von Franz (1994/1997) in her essay on the unknown visitor offers comments that take our intimacy with Khidr to a deeper level. She says, “It is no coincidence that two divine figures knock on the door of Philemon and Baucis, and that Khidr and Elijah also appear as a pair”(p. 62). In his 1953 letter to Pere Bruno, Jung writes that Elijah is identical with the figure of Khadir or Khidr in Islamic tradition (1953/1976b, p. 675). “Ilyas,” the Arabic form of Elijah’s name, “and Khidr are immortal twins” (pp. 675-676). Duality as a motif always points to the fact that

although an unconscious content is actually single, as a content of the unconscious it possesses paradoxical qualities. When it begins to appear on the threshold of consciousness, it manifests itself in opposites. For example, Jupiter is the supreme god of human and cosmic order. Mercury, by contrast, is a trickster who creates unexpected “coincidences.” In Khidr-Elijah, still more than in Jupiter-Mercury, this trickster nature is especially prominent as a

compensation for the lawfulness of Yahweh and Allah. As we shall see, this quality of duality or dual nature of the unknown visitor is very widespread. It points to a strange 'either-or' in this figure - good or evil, divine or human. (Von Franz, 1994/1997, pp. 61-62)

A pair of psychic opposites appears spontaneously in a symbol from the unconscious, "clothing" itself in whatever material is available for the representation. Hence the many forms that an archetypal figure such as Khidr may take to human perception. Khidr may appear as a young man, a bearded elder, or a blade of grass. Elijah is known to appear "to Jews as a black man or an Arab" (Von Franz, 1994/1997, p. 61).

A single symbol unites "all possible psychic opposites, differentiated and primitive, conscious and unconscious" (1978/1993, p. 83). Most importantly, the symbol is "a content that dominates the whole personality," and compels unconscious participation and has a life-giving and life-enhancing effect" (p. 83). The power of the symbol recalls the compelling image that calls Moses away, leaving him willing to give up everything and follow the stranger into the wilderness. The unconscious content leads Moses, the ego, into a confusing, liminal place, so that rebirth can take place. This channeling of energy, libido towards new goals is what Jung calls "the real, life-giving activity of symbols, the transcendent function" (p. 83). The transcendent function does what Khidr appears to do for Moses. It is a process that facilitates a transition from one attitude to another.

Jung connects the spiritual pair of opposites with "dualism of the human will" (1916/1991, p. 170). The Third provides resistance and frees the pairs of opposites, which are normally most intimately united. Jung refers to another ancient myth of an encounter between a deity and a mortal, the Bhagavad-Gita:

"Be thou free of the pairs of opposites"

(Krishna to Arjuna in Book II, The Song Celestial, quoted in Jung, 1912/1956c, p. 176).

“Resistance needs an abnormal plus or minus on one side or the other” (Jung, 1916/1991, p. 170). This statement of Jung’s refers to inflation. It is one-sidedness that creates the presence of the Third (we may assume Khidr) who mediates between law and intuition (p. 170). Thus, we hear that Khidr is not the intuitive side but the Third, the representative, messenger of the Higher Wisdom, who counterbalances the law of logic and order embodied in Moses. Moses is the hero, the man on the quest, a pilgrimage on which he is attended by his “shadow,” the “servant” or “lower” man, the sarkikos and pneumatikos as found in the Epistles of St. Paul, (Jung, 1939/1944, p. 17)) in one and the same individual. The sarkikos remains eternally under the law, and the pneumatikos is capable of being born again to liberty (p. 17).

Arriving at the right place in the right time (the alchemical kairos) is psychologically essential to transformation and encounter with a Khidr figure. In Sura 18 there is a poignant time and place that is reached, but it is not yet ripe for the encounter. The place where Moses’ servant Joshua of Nun forgot the fish is the place they sought.

The fish, which was forgotten at the place sought but overlooked, “refers to Nun, a name of a fish, the father of the shadow, or of man in his carnal nature which has his origin in the dark world of the creator”(p. 19). Moses’ servant is Joshua of Nun, a shadow figure who disappears when Moses encounters Khidr. Jung interprets the fish’s return to the waters of the sea, the symbolic unconscious as “loss of soul” in the language of shamanic belief or an “abaissement du niveau mental” in the psychological terminology of Pierre Janet. The description of this phenomenon is very similar to the states of nigredo and mortificatio, as we will see in the section on alchemy. The fish is lost to the water of life, and Moses has missed the opportunity,

just as Alexander did in the earlier romance, and in the Gilgamesh epic when the hero overslept. Jung does not elaborate on the missed opportunity, and lack of consciousness, but the ensuing affect of Moses is suggested to be, understandably, depression.

Moses is fatigued, hoping to rest from his long journey and hungry. Jung identifies this state as a feeling of insufficiency, for which a physiological reason is given. "Fatigue is one of the most regular symptoms of such loss of energy or libido" (1939/1944, p. 19). This phenomenon, Jung explains, is what is known as "dissociation" in the psychopathology of neuroses. Most importantly, as Jung points out, this process is connected with one-sidedness in the conscious attitude. Moses has become so focused on the quest for knowledge, and with it the secret of immortality, that he has come out of balance, an intellect driven by ego. The role of Khidr is thus compensatory for one-sidedness of the ego in Moses.

There is clear indication that the Arabic alchemists understood the *opus* to be a transmutation of the base elements of psyche into a whole being, and that there is a mutuality of consciousness between the ego and the Self. In this discussion of alchemy and Jung's interpretation of the Khidr myth, I would like to call attention to a critique offered by Spiegelman (1991) regarding Jung's characterization of "the Islamic prophet's primitive cast of mind" (p. 15). I believe this is not primitive in a negative sense, but primal, the essential, prima materia of psyche unfettered by Western technology. Jung (1961/1973) said that "the essential thing is to differentiate oneself from these unconscious contents by personifying them, and at the same time to bring them into relationship with consciousness" (p. 187).

The sun, symbol of rebirth and life, with which we have identified the Khidr myth, is found again in the Arabic alchemical text of "Senior" (Von Franz, 1980).

Interestingly, the name Senior is Sheikh in Arabic, carrying the meaning of the Wise Old Man. The sun, as an aspect of consciousness, is portrayed as writing a love letter to the moon. If portrayed with one ray, the sun represents an inflated ego, such as described in our Moses-hero. The sun with two rays, on the other hand, symbolizes “the ego as an instrument of realization for the Self” (von Franz, 1980, p. 155). The alchemist had the knowledge of man’s potential to affect and transform God, just as Job transformed Yahweh.

In Aion (1950/1978) Jung further developed his interpretation of “Christ as Mercurius,” a transcendent being more divine than human who performs a function of “union of instinct and spirit” (p. 313). Khidr may easily be compared to Mercurius in certain of his elusive, enigmatic actions, but it is important to keep in mind that Khidr is not Roman nor a god, but an Islamic figure with human aspects. However, as with Mercurius, Khidr’s interaction with Moses may be viewed as a compensatory function to union to the psyche.

The Perigrinatio text. The alchemical writings of Michael Maier inform Jung’s understanding of the arcane art as a psychological teaching. Maier’s “Perigrinatio text” (Edinger, 1995) is a story about an adept, an alchemist who wrote the text who embarks on a series of travels (the Journey). He goes first to the north (Europe), then he goes to the west (America), he then goes to the east (Asia). And now he has just one place left to go, namely south (Africa), and so he heads south. The idea seems to be that he has to touch all the bases. On his way south he encounters a statue of Mercury pointing to Paradise. He gets a brief glimpse of Paradise, but this doesn’t last very long (it is hard to stay with the numinous). The statue of Mercurius sounds strangely like another image of a soul guide, one captivating the imagination of the mentally disengaged and creative Jung while carving on the Bollingen Stone, a

circle with a homunculus, from the Greek inscription about Telesphoros of Asklepios, “a pointer of the way, who roams through the dark regions of the cosmos and glows like a star out of the depths. He points the way to the gates of the sun and to the land of dreams” (fragments from Heraclitus, Mithra’s liturgy, and Homer’s Odyssey Book 24, verse 12, quoted in Jung, 1961/1973, p. 228).

Khidr may be said to be a pointer of the way who roams through the dark regions also. The pilgrim then proceeds to Africa, which is “parched, sterile, and empty” (Jung, 1968/1976, p. 211) --a very disagreeable place. Jung says it has “just about all the attributes of hell” (p. 211) (the desert, wilderness, mortificatio image). There is an encounter with a strange animal, the Ortus, paralleling the fish. Near the Red Sea the alchemist meets the Erythraean Sybil (Red Sybil), a prophetess who lives in a cave. She tells him to go to the seven mouths of the Nile in order to seek Mercurius (images of the sea, water, caves, appearance of the number 7). This is what the pilgrim has been seeking all along: the guide, Mercurius, whom he missed the first time. The pilgrim goes through the seven mouths of the Nile (seven planets, Seven Sleepers, seven stages of Islamic ascent to God), but Mercurius is not to be found.

Then, as in Moses’ return to the rock, the pilgrim retraces his steps, and when he gets back to the first house--the house of lead or of Saturn (the prima materia, base element), behold! There he finds Mercurius. We are then told that he had several conversations with Mercurius, but the content of those conversations is not reported. We learn in Jung’s (1955/1976) Mysterium Coniunctionis that secrets are shared in this conversation but we are not to learn what they are (p. 231). Jung speculates that Mercurius “either personifies the Great Teacher or else has the character of the arcane substance.....for Mercurius is the light-bringing Nous, who knows the secret of

transformation and of immortality” (p. 231). What a marvelous description of Khidr, as well!

Stages of change. In Mysterionum Coniunctionis (1955/1976), Jung analyzes psychological progression toward individuation using the metaphor of alchemical stages. In this context he is examining the archetypal images of the hierogamos, the king and queen in the royal marriage. Jung says that the religious problem of the king’s renewal may be studied as a “logical sequence of psychological changes” (p. 371). The Khidr myth follows the same sequence of stages. We can compare the logical sequence of psychological changes with alchemical stages and the Khidr myth in Table 2, on the following page:

Table 2
Khidr Myth as Psychological and Alchemical Stages

Psychological	Alchemical	Khidr Myth
I. Ego-bound state with feeble dominant	Sick king, enfeebled by age, about to die	Aging Moses on quest for water of immortality
II. Ascent of the Unconscious and/or descent of the ego into the unconscious.	Disappearance of the king In his mother's body or his dissolution in water. <u>Solutio</u>	Disappearance of the fish. Moses departs with Khidr. Place of the two seas, Confusion, liminality
III. Conflict and synthesis of conscious and unconscious	Pregnancy, sick-bed symptoms, display of colors	Conflict with Khidr. Reason and intuitive knowing interface.
IV. Formation of a new dominant: circular	King's son, hermaphrodite, <u>rotundum</u> , symbols of the self	New knowing, rebirth Transformation.

Note. From C. G. Jung, 1976, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.), The collected works of C. G. Jung (Vol. 14). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published in 1955) p. 371

The Qur'an. ("Koran") (1877). (G. Sale, Trans.). London: William Tegg & Company. (Sura 18: 60-82)

Balsam as transformative substance. There occurs what I call a “lapis moment,” when the Stone, the transformative object, is encountered and the conscious ego has yielded enough to allow a new insight, a rebirth of thought, a shift in consciousness. This equates to the transcendent function which appears in therapeutic container, the timeless and placeless kairos where transformation happens....and it is just a little bit, a lapis moment, not necessarily a total conversion.

The water of life is a frequently mentioned symbol in alchemy. There is a double reference to water as the spring of life and as balsam, in the following tale offered by Corbin (1972), that links the Khidr myth and alchemical symbols together for us.

In Mundis Imaginalis (1972), Corbin tells Suhrawardi's story of The Crimson Archangel to help the reader enter into the imaginal world as a place of liminal time, strange events, creativity and transformation. This story, written during the height of the golden age of Islam by a young Persian sheikh, tells of an encounter with Khidr. A captive, who has just escaped the watchful eyes of his gaolers, that is, one who has

momentarily left the world of sensible experience, finds himself in the desert in the presence of a being who appears to him to be endowed with all the graces of adolescence. He therefore asks him: “Whence do you come, oh Youth!” And the answer is: “How so? I am the eldest child of the Creator [in Gnostic terms the Protokistos, the First-Created] and you call me youth?” His origin gives the clue to the mysterious purple-red color in which he appears: it is the colour of a being that is pure Light, whose brilliance is attenuated to a twilight purple by the darkness of the world of earthly creatures. “I come from beyond Mount Khaf. This is where you were at the beginning and it is where you will return, once you are free of your shackles. (pp. 2-3)

Mount Khaf, explains Corbin, is a cosmic mountain in the topographical center of the mundis imaginalis. “Khaf” is also the name of Sura 18, the Cave, in which Khidr appears. The cosmology of this place, built up of celestial spheres, all enveloping one another is reminiscent of the cosmology of Plotinus. “However far

you may journey, you will always come back to the point of departure" (1972, p. 3). The timeless place where Khidr is met has a circular dimension not unlike like the process of alchemy represented by the uroboros, the circular symbol of the snake biting its own tail. The shift in consciousness, which is bound up in the encounter with Khidr, occurs within this liminal space. "In the meantime, a very important event will have changed everything" (p. 3). One experiences the self as a higher self, a "Thou," beyond Mount Khaf. To realize this, the traveler, like Khidr, must bathe in the Spring of Life (p. 3).

We are then presented with a wonderful image of the Self, perhaps also of the subtle body, the ethereal form of psychic contents that bridge the gap between the material and spirit world.

He who has discovered the meaning of True Reality has arrived at this Spring. When he emerges from the Spring, he is endowed with a Gift that likens him to the balsam of which a drop, distilled in the hollow of one's hand held up against the sun, trans-passes to the back of the hand. If you are Khezr, you, too, can pass beyond Mount Khaf without difficulty (Corbin, 1972, p. 3).

Corbin's interpretation suggests that the drop of balsam symbolizes that "it is essential to go inward, to penetrate to the interior" (1972, p. 5). A fitting symbol for depth psychology! As an added note, "Balsam occurs in Zosimos as a synonym for the aqua permanens" of the alchemists (Schwartz-Salant, 1995, p. 155). Thus the image of the transformative water of life and immortality resonates from the Khidr myth to alchemical texts.

The encounter with Khidr is sometimes imaginal, but just as often with a "flesh and blood" human being. The experience is felt as real and may indeed be a concrete, sensate occurrence. The religious function of the psyche seems to allow a connection to be perceived in the encounter between the subtle body of the imaginal

spirit, the subjective ego, and the incarnate figure, the object, the “Other,” that is encountered. Could it be that Khidr acts as a real object, an archetypal validation from the collective unconscious?

The appearance of a God-image in the form of an archetypal idea such as the concept of energy, mana, Logos, or a world mandala, is a projection of an important unconscious psychic factor. Von Franz (1980) makes an interesting point about the current split between the hard sciences and the sciences of the psyche. In comparing the history of the development of certain concepts used in physics with the history of religious hermeneutics, she sees “an apparent difference in that the third stage of the withdrawal of projections--the stage of moral evaluation--seems to be missing in the natural sciences” (p. 71). She believes that

many natural scientists, being thinkers, artificially repress the feeling function. This has led to that overvaluation of reason and of its product, technology, whose destructive consequences, both concrete and moral, we are beginning to see in the form of problems with pollution, disturbances of ecology, and so on. (p. 71)

The appearance of Khidr in the Qur'an addresses the overvaluation of the thinking function, of logic in the old law represented by Moses. The function of the symbol, of an archetypal content is to unite the pairs of opposites, to balance and compensate for a position of one-sidedness.

The image of the Green Man has come to the attention of many Westerners, such as Robert Romanyshyn (1989), who are concerned about the soulless-ness of the modern technological world. The European Green Man, as a vegetative nature spirit, is an opposite of man-made machines. Khidr, also, is an opposite of rational thinking and technology. The Khidr myth is not familiar in the West and as a stranger does, it

stirs uncomfortable feelings, for it moves in unknowable, unconscious levels to provoke change.

An ancient mythologem from the Islamic world, with a language-bound differing sense of time and space, may be too awkward for the general Western reader to integrate. However, the phenomena of the individual encounters we have discussed indicate that Khidr is active in the world today. Perhaps the Khidr myth is emerging as part of a new myth for “breakdown of the cultural-psychological dream” that will bring the breakdown of the modern “linear, fixed perspective, and the breakdown of all that goes with it including literal, univocal, singular modes of perceiving and thinking” (Romanyshyn, p. 225). The function of Khidr in the mythic encounter with Moses is exactly that, to break down old ways of being and knowing.

Summary

This chapter presents C. G. Jung’s understanding of the myth in Sura 18 as a rebirth mystery. Khidr is seen as an archetype, a parallel figure to Elijah the Prophet who acts as a guide to the underworld, the unconscious. Synchronicity as a feature of the Khidr experience is discussed in relation to the nature of the archetype. Jung interprets the appearance of a beetle as a synchronistic event that shifts a patient’s perspective. Pairs of psychic opposites are untied in symbols and archetypal figures such as Khidr. The appearance of such unconscious contents take many forms and provide what Jung calls “the real, life-giving activity of symbols, the transcendent function” (Von Franz, 1978/1993, p. 84). The transcendent function does what Khidr appears to do for Moses. It is a process that facilitates a transition from one attitude to another.

Chapter 7
The Three Acts of Khidr:
Suffering and Meaning in Unknowing

In patientia vestra possidebitis anima vestras.

By your patience you will win your souls. (Luke 21:19)

Suffering

Suffering is a universal human experience, linked to the inevitability of death and pain. These life experiences are common themes in myths, especially those of quests in which the hero seeks an elixir or a Grail of healing for relief from mortal woes and answers to the riddle of life. Events of suffering often seem more tolerable if some form of meaning is associated with them. Khidr is an archetypal figure that I understand to be a powerful psychological metaphor for acceptance of suffering and transformation.

There are three events connected to suffering and meaning in the Khidr myth. Khidr is responsible for terrible and inexplicable actions; the poor owners of a ship will be drowned, an innocent boy is brutally murdered, and a service is rendered to mean, undeserving, inhospitable people. These traumatic events stir feelings of confusion and anxiety in the observing ego, as portrayed by Moses in the myth. As a psychological concept, the observer represents the ego as it splits off the intolerable affect and dissociates or represses part of the psyche. Anxiety is felt because of Khidr's ambiguity. There is no reason or meaning for the suffering or the affront to morality given, until the immortal being explains his actions. In the denouement, the events are seen to be divinely ordained for reasons that are not immediately apparent. Ultimately an explanation to conscious ego represented by Moses is provided for each event. In just a few sentences, Khidr creates a shift in Moses' perspective of reality.

event. In just a few sentences, Khidr creates a shift in Moses' perspective of reality. The myth is pointing to an important psychological moment. The moment is one of a new understanding of the world in relationship to one's self. Transformation of consciousness occurs as a person begins to differentiate between his or her own psychic reality and external reality.

The process of individuation and differentiation, the hero's journey towards becoming conscious, is not a single event but an on-going spiral of readjustments and corrections in the psyche. Khidr's function as an archetypal mentor and guide embodies wisdom from a higher source. His work involves knowledge and bringing deeper understanding to consciousness so that suffering may be accepted and transformation may occur. The alchemist's dictum for this process is "Solve et coagula." Dissolve and build up, breakdown and breakthrough, the on-going spiral of new growth through letting the old die that characterizes the path of individuation. "No pain, no gain," is a popular expression describing this paradox.

Just as the Greek threshold deity, Hermes, is known for stealing, Khidr is associated with shock, surprise, and ambiguity. In the presence of Khidr, reality is perceived in a manner that arrests one's attention and creates extraordinary space for the re-alignment of one's perspective. Death, loss, destruction, and injustice occur and evoke primitive fears and anxiety.

The meaning of the three events reveals a higher purpose in the Khidr myth. Re-framing of suffering and pathology is consistent with the "re-visioned" psychology of James Hillman (1975). Hillman asserts that affliction contains a complex, and "within the complex there is an archetype, which in turn refers to a God" (p. 104). The intolerable acts performed by Khidr symbolize experiences that cause suffering in

life. It is not coincidental that the original meaning of pathos in Greek meant “something that happens,” “experiences” (p. 97).

Waiting in Unknowing

The response given when Moses expresses his desire to stay with the numinous figure of divine wisdom shows Khidr’s understanding of human limits. “Verily, thou canst not bear with me: for how canst thou patiently suffer those things, the knowledge whereof thou dost not comprehend? You do not have the patience to tolerate things which you cannot possibly comprehend” (Sura 18:67-68).

In Moses’ present, untransformed state of understanding, the three events he witnesses are a metaphor for the injustices and suffering of life. Each time Moses questions Khidr, the contract of silent waiting is broken. After the third event is disputed, Khidr explains his actions to Moses with the reminder that now their journey together must end. “This shall be a separation between you and me” (Sura 18:78).

The most common and traditional interpretation of this story by Islamic scholars is that it teaches of sabr, forbearance and patience in the face of life’s incomprehensible sufferings and seeming injustices which are God’s will. Moses represents mankind in his inability to understand difficult things that are divinely ordained. Moses cannot put his reason to rest and is ruled by his inflated ego and intellectual function. Moses symbolizes law and order, for he was the recipient of the Torah on Mount Sinai for the Jewish people. In archetypal psychology, Khidr may be interpreted as an aspect of the Self, the divine wisdom that can only be known through letting go of intellect and reason, through trust and patient waiting.

A therapist needs, along with self-awareness, the ability to let go and move from the stance of ego to a waiting state of not-knowing that requires humility, consciousness, and distance. This state allows the attitude of nonjudgmental acceptance, much like that found in Buddhism, to create an altered space for new contents to enter the consciousness. Waiting in this state is an experience, for both therapist and patient, of painful ambiguity. Silence itself is a form of communication. A relationship is implied in verbal emptiness that contains and incubates potential for therapeutic shift.

Within the containing function of the analytic attitude, which permits the self's "touches of God to do their work, the deintegrated self can be experienced. The coniunctio is uniquely made possible by deintegration, which creates a psychological state that transcends both inner and outer worlds in a heightened sense of alive participation in life" (Naifeh, 1994, p. 24). Meaning, which is what Moses sought to learn from Khidr, is what impels us to go on, to embody spirit in action, as Jim did when he left my office with new life in his step and a new way of knowing. Without meaning Moses and Jim were unable to bear the journey. Without a sense of suffering having meaning, as Viktor Frankel (1959/1972) explains in his logotherapy, survival in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany was not likely. Khidr is the agent of revealed meaning. "Meaning" in this context refers to the emotional satisfaction which is gained by the sense that one's suffering is purposeful rather than random" and "not used in the cognitive sense of asserting verifiable factual information" (Corbett, 1996, p. 166). Moses is suffering from his own perception of the seemingly unjust pain of others, as well as experiencing his own anxiety, frustration, and confusion in the face of a series of intolerable events. He is impulsive

in asking for reasons and in his critique of the immortal guide he has contracted with in order to follow and learn from.

The work of the psychotherapist also includes helping the client to reach the state of acceptance, to become fully present and within the experience of the condition of suffering. This state is the place of unknowing, a place to which the therapist must be willing and able to accompany the patient. To remain in this place of unknowing is to suffer, but here is where meaning emerges. This almost transpersonal experience of the transference differs from the Freudian concept with the same slant on a third space as Winnicott and in Jung's belief that he in fact suffered with the patient (Naifeh, 1994). Hillman reminds us that the alchemists, whose goal was transformation, spoke of "patience as a first quality of soul, and considered soul-making the longest journey, a *via longissima*" (1975, p. 94).

Waiting in silence provides a safeguard against premature interventions. "Consciousness too early awakened may not only ruin the use the patient has to (not wants to) make of the analyst, but may also load him with intolerable guilt, perpetrating another cycle of remorse and need for oblivion" (Plaut, 1969, p. 210). The danger of "too early or too insistent transference interpretations is as real as unawareness of the transference" (p. 210). Withholding interpretation as Khidr does with Moses, as the Self to the ego; the therapist increases anxiety and ambiguity, but at the same time creates a *temenos*, a container for what may be viewed as an initiatory process.

Initiation and Addiction

Initiation may be seen as an integral stage of the individuation process and therapeutic approach to addictions (Naifeh, 1994). He believes that initiation, as

described by Henderson is “the archetype underlying development or transformation within the Psyche” (quoted in Naifeh, p. 14). Addiction, in Jung’s view, is related to a normal human drive towards wholeness gone awry (p. 1). “Addiction as a psycho-physiological phenomenon is far more complicated and in fact operates much like the complexes, which induce suffering but will continue to possess the individual under some hidden incentive or compulsion the core of which is an archetype (p. 1).

It appears that there is a strong motivating force deriving the addictive behavior that goes beyond the instinct to seek pleasure. According to Naifeh (1994, p. 4), the libido or energy motivating addiction is instinct although destructively diverted. This process creates the pain associated with the later stages of addiction. Jung’s analytic theory provides an approach that extends Freud’s theory of instincts. Instincts are more complex than purely pleasure seeking or aggression. The source, impetus, aim, and object of instinct are “arranged in energetic patterns” (p. 4), which in turn reflect archetypal patterns. Jung’s psychology of the Self is the only analytic theory that accounts for the spiritual motive as other than defensive (Naifeh, p. 1). His understanding of “symbol formation and transformation as evidencing primary instinctual patterns” (p. 24) allows us to interpret psychologically the meaning of a spiritually significant mythological figure such as Khidr.

In the terminology of Alcoholics Anonymous, (AA), “hitting bottom,” describes a point when things look darkest, a lowest point on the progressive descent to Hell, the nigredo of alchemy. At this point the illusion of control is shattered by a sense of failure or defeat. In this liminal, underworld place, the addicted alcoholic may experience a shift of consciousness and be able to perceive another way of life. This point is the place of transformation known in rituals of initiation as the secret

encounter with the holy. "In the AA process the recovering person essentially turns to the archetypal level directly in order to initiate recovery" (Naifeh, 1994, p. 14).

The pivotal initiatory event for the alcoholic is hitting bottom. Transformation takes the form of a personal, spiritual experience and acknowledgement of a power greater than one's self, in effect, recognition of the Self and one's ego position as subordination to the Self. AA members say, "I surrendered to my higher power." The individual has had a "first conscious recognition of an overwhelming archetypal force, and this paves the way for a later realization of the power of the self to heal" (Naifeh, 1994, p. 6). In ancient times, the Greeks had rituals for initiation that marked a transformation. The god encountered was Dionysus.

In Women's Dionysian Initiation (1988), Linda Fierz-David writes of the Greek god, Dionysus, with words of one who has encountered Khidr. She states, "The Orphic Dionysus embodies the Self as the center of psychic life" (p. 21). Dionysus "unites all opposites" and becomes "a redeeming image of the goal." He is a symbol of unification, and "life and death in one," "reborn" from the thigh of Zeus and an immortal god-man. We hear that he is fiery and also watery, for he always comes out of the water--out of a sea or over the ocean, paralleling the water of Khidr.

Dionysus' appearances may vary, as an animal, or "in ivy, in wine, in pine and spruce, he is plant like, recalling Khidr as "pure white light" or "a blade of grass" (Jung, 1939/1944, p. 22). Most importantly, Dionysus as Self does not manifest himself a heavenly light or as a higher order. He "always shines forth from the depths" (Fierz-David, 1988, p. 21). In true Khidr fashion, Dionysus "is always the entirely unexpected, that which overtakes one, shuddering; an irrational, emotional event that wells up; a shock that befalls from which one cannot withdraw" (p. 21). He

brings the strange feeling of new highest values through which the human heart can be seized, transformed, and redeemed" (p. 21).

The intellect in an encounter with the projected contents of the self or with suffering caused by distressful reality is mightily challenged to be transformed and see a new perspective. Integration involves taking back and assimilating projections. In addition, there must be a "realization of the double aspect of unconscious contents and their feeling value. In Plaut's (1969, p. 207) words, this means the realization of ambivalence in every subject/object relationship and the conscious acceptance of conflict." With the alcoholic who hits bottom, with Jung's descent into the unconscious, and in the encounter with Khidr in ambiguous liminality, in the space and time of the nigredo, the autochthonous archetype is encountered. What ensues, if there is sufficient ego strength and a container, is a new perspective. The depths are an experience of "loss of soul" (Jung, 1939/1944, p. 19). Loss of soul is portrayed in the myth by Moses' retracing his steps to the place where the fish was forgotten. This represents a return to the water of unconsciousness and regression, a drive to merge with the archetypal mother as matrix of the psyche, in which the resurrected fish swam away. In that place he meets Khidr who functions as an aspect of the self. An addiction is often experienced as a "takeover by the mother," writes Naifeh (p. 11). The loss of self to substance ingestion symbolizes a regressive capitulation to the devouring or terrible mother (p. 11).

In the therapeutic relationship, the therapist may carry the projection of the Self for the patient, thus becoming the Khidr for the seeker. The question of mutuality arises, out of the model of Job and Yahweh. Is Khidr changed in the relationship with Moses? Is Yahweh changed by his relationship with Job? Jung says yes. Similarly, Khidr is a projected part of the self, and a split-off content of Moses'

ego, and transformation that occurs affects the whole. Khidr is also a numinous psychic reality, the Self, as such he is divine and represents the god within Moses. In Answer to Job, Jung (1952/1967) suggests the idea of God needing man so that both may become more conscious within the relationship and allow personal growth along the Ego-Self axis. In Psychology and Religion, West and East, Jung (1938/1989) writes:

The self, feels our sacrifice as a sacrifice of itself. From that sacrifice we gain ourselves--our "self" for we have only what we give. But what does the self gain? We see it entering into manifestation, freeing itself from unconscious projection and as it grips us, entering into our lives and so passing from unconsciousness into consciousness, from potentiality into actuality. What it (the self) is in the diffuse unconscious state we do not know; we only know that in becoming ourselves it has become man. (p. 262)

Wholeness arrives in a relationship as unconscious pathology projected onto the other becomes conscious. In this meeting, in this coniunctio is the transformative space, the transitional space where we may meet the divine within us. As mirroring the Self is a metaphor for conscious growth, in transformative awakening we become mirrors for a higher Self longing to meet us with its own being as well.

Writing of Job's suffering, Jung says, "When an external event touches on some unconscious knowledge, this knowledge can reach consciousness" (1952/1967, p. 88). This unconscious, pre-existent knowledge may be a déjà vu (p. 88) or a psychological complex. Psychological complexes, according to Hillman (1975) are the cause of suffering, the gods making their presence felt in our pathology. This external reality is where the therapist can meet the patient, in the waiting, patiently for the right moment when the complex can be brought to consciousness.

Moses is in the psychological state of the alchemical nigredo and wants immediate relief. As in the real experience of depression and darkness, there is no

vision hope or possibility of envisioning light at the end of the tunnel. Thus, the ego is impulsive in asking for reasons and justification, yielding to the discomfort with ambiguity. Direct encounter with the numinous, the Self is impossible to integrate or sustain for very long. Moses is unable to tolerate Khidr's presence and deeds, so unconsciously sabotages his objective.

A Model of Acceptance

There are many models of acceptance and endurance of suffering such as in the Hindu concept of karma and rebirth to break out of the wheel of life, and Christian martyrdom to obtain sainthood and treasures in Heaven. The Islamic view is that Khidr appears in order to teach Moses and mankind a lesson of acceptance and patience, through surrender, abnegation of self, and patience. The struggle of the biblical Job is also a tale of patience and forbearance with seemingly pointless trials. Job, however, proved to be steadfast even in the face of suffering far more personal and direct than any actions that Moses witnessed at Khidr's side.

The problem of suffering is dealt with in various ways in Judaism. In a parallel story to the Khidr Myth, the tale is told of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, who travels with the Prophet Elijah, a Khidr counterpart, in second century CE Palestine. This Talmudic-Midrashic tale is identical to the Khidr-Moses myth, with the addition of one more confounding event, so that the rabbi is given four rather than three trials on the journey (Gorion, 1990). The Prophet Elijah provides the same motivation for his shocking deeds as Khidr does for Moses. The theological interpretation in Judaism as in Islam, is a lesson of the importance of acceptance of suffering and injustice as God's higher wisdom, as part of a holy life and human survival.

The concept of faithful acceptance of suffering for a higher purpose recalls another story of unattached acceptance of suffering. The story of the tradition of the Lamed Vovs, the 36 Hidden Just Men who exist in the world at all times, sharing the suffering of those in pain (Harris, 1996). This tale goes deeper towards offering some satisfaction that there is purpose and meaning to enduring the pain of life in a state of trust and unknowing. A little boy, learning that he was to live as a Lamed Vov, mistakenly wanted to take on pain deliberately so that he could change the outcome of events and his beloved grandfather would not have to suffer and die. He learned in time, however, that his service was to be accepting and present with suffering of others without changing anything, but only sharing in the pain of the world so that others need not suffer alone. This tale points out that there must be a balance, so that one does not take on suffering in misguided martyrdom, just as Buddhism teaches moderation and the Middle Way in all things, including suffering and avoidance. When the boy learned to accept suffering while letting go of reason and ego, as Khidr attempted to teach Moses, there was a shift in his consciousness and he became compassionate for all life, in the detached holy manner of a Buddha and a true Lamed Vov.

Detachment may clear the way for relationship with the Self. Even things that happen which appear to be bad may be accepted as good. In Chassidic Judaism, the energy for unattached acceptance of everything that happens as connected to God is called simcha, joy. Joy goes beyond rigid obedience to Torah as Law. Service with joy creates connection to God to the larger Self. The rabbis teach that the real meaning of seemingly horrible events will ultimately be seen as for the best. The Holocaust is a collective event of unspeakable suffering that challenges the intellect and mortal ability to go on in unknowing and patient trust. The emotion that such an

uncertainty on the journey just as the secular therapist does. Contemporary Chassidic rabbi and scholar Adin Steinsaltz (1988) believes that “to say ‘this too is for the best’ is hardly the same thing as superficial optimism....to recognize the reality of pain and an attempt get to the root of suffering” involves patience, endurance, tolerance and letting go of self, just as the Khidr story teaches (p. 177). Finding good in bad things is possible.

This takes a lot of time, a great deal of tumultuous repudiation before one reaches a relatively peaceful state of equilibrium. In other words the Chassidic teacher tells us that his wisdom cannot really remove the pain or resolve the sadness. It can only eliminate the anxiety, the tension, the fear, and the uncertainty. (Steinsaltz, 1988, p. 178).

The Therapist's Role

How can psychotherapy help a suffering patient to find meaning? The analyst's efforts to work with a patient imply that the analyst has a different take on life than the patient has. The analyst has presumably a personal Weltanschauung, based on reflection and experience. To be effective, it is important for analysts to be as analyzed and conscious as possible, because they bring themselves and all their biases, theological beliefs, complexes, and blind spots into the therapeutic relationship. Who the analyst is as a person supercedes theory. The encounter between therapist and patient occurs because the patient's adaptive strategies are no longer working. As Hollis (1998, p. 31) says,

One finds oneself making self-defeating choices in spite of the best of motives; suffering the recurrence of primal wounds such as abandonment or overwhelmment, retreating before the insurgence of the Self whose displeasure is expressed in depression, phobias, addictions, and the like. Dragged as it were, to face oneself, one is forcibly positioned where the Self may be heard.

In this encounter with the Self, one may experience the transformation called Auseinandersetzung by Jung and metanoia by the Greeks.

Therapy can show the link of suffering to meaning and to the totality of life's seemingly ambiguous and confusing pattern. Thus bearing the pain only to get through it is not the only good motivation to stay with the affect, to be present in the suffering in therapy. If the therapist has gone on his own "night sea journey" and is comfortable with the ambiguity, anxiety, and obscured vision the patient suffers, then there is hope and reason to play both Virgil as reason and Beatrice as revelation to the lost Dante in the dark forest. Ideally, the therapist can listen to the patient's pain and not feel resistance or have personal issues obstruct or cloud the process. For a therapist to assume the possession of a healing balm or the answers to existential questions is a danger of over identification with one's own persona, believing one's own press releases. Therapy sets the stage for the moment of *coniunctio* when transformation may occur.

Traditional psychotherapy has aimed at restoring one's capacity to work and to enjoy life. Frankel's approach of logotherapy, borne from his personal experiences, goes further than work and enjoyment as goals. Frankel believes in helping the patient to regain his capacity to suffer, if need be, thereby finding meaning even in suffering. For the depth psychologist, there is an awareness of the possibility of a transformation arising out of the spontaneous creation of a transcendent space between analyst and patient.

Suffering wants consciousness. Consciousness is painful because the ego has to leave an entire world of illusions and become open to the reality of change and transformation. Consciousness is, as Hillman says, a death to knowing and the known.

Reality is not what we think it is or what we think it should be. This is true for Moses' attempt to make sense out of Khidr's actions using an outdated, one-sided, rational way of seeing the world. A patient's frustration with life may come from reality not being what he had expected it to be. The suffering is prolonged by his inability to see any other perspective. A shift in consciousness is necessary to move out of being stuck in depression. A sense of incompleteness is a cause of suffering. It is this incompleteness of self that therapy attempts to address, in the psychological theory of Jung. In facilitating the movement towards wholeness and integration, the therapist is thereby "assisting in the incarnation of the Self" (Corbett, 1996, p. 148).

The archetypes, myths, and images of suffering themselves are transformative, as the importance to the Western psyche of the icon of the crucifixion attests (Hillman, 1995). Once the archetype of Khidr, Elijah, Mercurius, Hermes, or any form of the gods presents itself, and the symptom, such as suffering from depression or anxiety, is consciously connected to the archetype, then vast depths of surprising realities appear that may radically change the consciousness and the life direction of the suffering soul.

Meaning is sometimes uncovered in therapy through elucidation of the archetypal background. The material may be a dream, a fantasy, a vision, or an experience of an encounter with an unknown, surprising "Other" that carries particularly strong affect. The "Other" may appear as an old man at the door, a homeless person, a child with haunting eyes, or even a certain slant of light on a leaf. The Khidr experience is known through the affect it stirs. Meaning slips in with the seepage of light between words spoken and bodily reactions to the incarnation of the archetypal and forgotten self.

Early Trauma and Transformation

Therapy is not about relieving suffering, it's about repairing one's relationship to reality. (Anonymous)

What is the meaning of suffering and Moses' experience of the unbearable in the Khidr myth? It is important not to overlook the psychological meaning of suffering as expressed in this archetypal story. Unbearable experience is met with in clinical work, often as early trauma created by events that could not be metabolized by the psyche (Kalsched, 1998). When a child lives through an experience so unthinkable that it produces what Winnicott calls "primitive agonies" or "great psychic pain and anxiety," archaic defense operations come into play for survival. These archaic defenses rescue the innocent self by splitting up the wholeness of the experience, so that the self cannot live fully in the world (Kalsched).

The primitive defenses that Winnicott describes are seen in Jung's analysis of the Khidr myth as having an archetypal basis. The archetypal level is another the level where the Khidr myth operates, showing the split-off self as the immortal soul-guide. Looking at the entire mythologem as the Psyche, Moses represents the intellect, an ego forging ahead through life without integration of the feeling function. His hope is to become all-knowing and ultimately to become immortal like Khidr. Survival is of supreme importance to a traumatized child, and feeling is often sacrificed or repressed so that the self can go on. But the self is lacking wholeness, and later in life crossroads may present a meeting with the part of self that has been so long denied it seems to be totally "other," just as Khidr appears to Moses.

Consider the journey itself, as psychological travel into the desert, an empty, barren place, and a wilderness that represents a world apart from reality. A child growing up with a primitive defense operation to trauma will be seen as spacey or in

the clouds, living in a world of fantasy. Kalsched uses fairy tales to illustrate the archetypal story of the repressed self and the journey towards integration of the separated, conscious parts.

Parts of the personality become regressed and hidden away like the heroine in the fairytale of Rapunzel. In this fairytale, The innocent young girl Rapunzel is sequestered in a high door-less tower, walled off and held captive by the enchantress, who represents the “imperishable spirit” of the personality, the “personal daimon” (Kalsched, 1996, p. 32). This part of the self caretakes the innocent child, as provider of psychic soothing. Kalsched says that this care-taking part is the primeval ambivalent self. The unconscious aspect of the repressed self is soothing, and offers archetypal reunion, access to experiences of union, bliss, addiction to food and alcohol, and often is the voice behind these addictions.

As with Sandor Ferenczi’s patient “R. N.,” who suffered sexual abuse from her father throughout childhood, early trauma resulted in a split in the personality (Kalsched, 1996, p. 120). The way in which the personal daimon enters is through fantasy and dreams. One of the purposes of the archetypal psyche and its central organizing archetype, which we call the Self, is to keep the ego alive. The price that must be paid is high, however, for the escape may be into total fantasy or suicide. The intervention of psychotherapy is invaluable in offering a channel of reality to the archetypal inner world.

The organizing instinct comes into play creating a repressed feeling component of the personality. Unbearable affects are held in the body. The ego knows nothing of this repressed part. It is accessible only through sleep or trance, what Winnicott called “the true self” in cold storage. What we hope for in this kind of patient, asserts Kalsched (1998), is an eventual rebirth. The Khidr encounter, as

we know from Jung's (1939/1944) archetypal analysis, is a myth about psychological rebirth.

The traumatized patient experiences a split between the bad self, bad because of identification with the abuser, and the good self of the dependent, needy child. The child needs to find meaning in the unbearable act of abuse and makes it seem meaningful by finding the self at fault. The patient sees himself or herself as a bad girl or boy and the abusing parent becomes the introjected aggressor, a permanent inner figure.

We need to integrate two things, says Winnicott, love and hate, also known as Eros and Aries. People who are traumatized cannot integrate these aspects of themselves because of rage that is experienced as unbearable. The painful affect then becomes directed at them to repress their own libidinous needs. Traumatized people cannot unitize aggressive energy. This is what clinicians run into as Borderline pathology and the victim-perpetrator complex.

In our myth of Khidr, we see a split that is referred to in the two seas that meet in a certain place that the ego, Moses, must find. Is there any reason to suspect that Moses as the historical figure of the lawgiver has been traumatized? In the theory of Jung, our greatest fear is of a catastrophe or trauma that has already happened. A present event activated the memory of the past trauma, as Jung demonstrated with his association experiments. In these experiments, words are read to the patient by the analyst, with notation made of the response and the number of seconds for the response to be made. Jung discovered complexes in the psyche indicated by a delay in response to making an association with certain words. Words that carry an emotional charge for the particular individual such as "mother" or "bed" trigger an unconscious

reaction that reveal evidence of a clustering of repressed affect and feeling tone around nexi of certain complexes.

What might the early trauma of Moses in the Khidr story have been? We can only speculate from what is known in scripture and legend that he suffered from fear of abandonment. His early object-relations were disrupted. Because of the harsh authoritarian father-king figure of the Pharaoh, the infant Moses was removed, under the threat of death to all newborn Hebrews, from his biological father and mother. He was placed into a life-threatening situation, a basket on the Nile River. He was claimed as a surrogate son by the fancy another woman, Pharaoh's daughter, who hired the real mother to wet-nurse him. As a young man, Moses murdered an Egyptian. Khidr's murder of the young boy seems to be an allusion to Moses' act, a re-traumatizing of Moses in stirring up a shameful memory and consciousness of his own lost boyhood innocence.

The abandonment and interrupted mothering the infant Moses received constituted trauma and less than good-enough mothering. With inadequate mirroring and validation of the child's feelings, as Winnicott says, the early affects are not personalized or humanized. In not having the chance to become integrated, the early affects (the "affect precursor" of Henry Krystal in Kalsched, 1996, p. 98) become an "affect storm." A volcanic storm of affect on volcanic "affect precursors" is experienced that is personal and also collective in the sense of being primordial, archetypal, and mythological. The earlier traumatic experience may be later felt as transpersonal or daemonic (Kalsched).

Most mythology is about how two worlds come together, the Special World and the Ordinary World, that of God and human. The Hero crosses the threshold between the two worlds in an attempt to unite the two. The Hero is motivated by a

lack in his life or in himself. Something is missing, thus a fairytale will often be about a couple yearning for a child they have not been about to have. This yearning represents a longing for a full life, an actualized self and potential wholeness. In early trauma, the ego may be separated from the transpersonal. This is the case with Moses. He represents the estranged Ego, and must act out the yearning journey to cross the threshold into what Winnicott calls the “transitional space” and alludes to in his words “On the seashore of endless worlds, children play” (Tagore, quoted in Winnicott, 1994, p. 95).

The repressed affect that appears in Jung’s association tests and in dreams is also responsible for a shadow personality. The shadow personality represents unconscious contents and degraded, inferior feeling parts of the personality which are experienced as conscious affect when some event causes a re-constellation of the feeling of the original trauma. As a dissociated complex, there is no evidence of it unless a trigger brings it to awareness, and then it is confusing because the affect is often much stronger than the current event warrants. The shadow may be experienced as a threatening axe-man in a woman’s dream or an adult experience of fear and being tongue-tied in a situation that replicates a childhood trauma such as a humiliating failure at school.

What happens when sudden affect disrupts the normal state? The earlier trauma that created the affect is not remembered, except in the body. The body will faithfully reproduce the symptoms of the original repressed trauma reaction: sweating palms, racing heart, shortness of breath, and all of the sympathetic nervous system responses to a threat to life. The ego, in encountering sudden affect, is undone and becomes the affect ego of the complex, explains Kalsched.

In the story of Khidr, we may postulate that Moses is experiencing some very strong reactions to the disturbing events that his shadow personality is bringing to conscious awareness. The affect stirs images archetypal images, and archetypal images are universal because humans are universal (Kalsched, 1998). The unconscious complex as archetypal, taps into universal experience and the collective. The archetypal is experienced as strange, uncanny, and dangerous. These words describe the figure encountered as Khidr.

In keeping with Jung's analysis of the myth, the therapeutic work of making the earlier trauma conscious results in an increase in power, a rebirth. Meeting an archetypal, transpersonal figure in the zone between the two worlds is an experience described and accounted for in the Greek and Roman myths. Hermes and Mercury are archetypal figures who travel as messengers in the zone of unknowing, between the two worlds of divine wisdom and human understanding. As Kalsched points out, this is why we work with dreams in psychoanalysis. Dreams link up one world with another. In fairy tales and myth the meeting often occurs by the sea, a river, at twilight or dawn, at places and times where the edges of reality are blurred.

One of the underlying reasons the Hero goes off to the quest is to find something that is missing. A successful encounter with the repressed contents of self such as in the Wizard of Oz when the wizard is exposed as not so terrifying and large is the beginning of the humanization of the archetype. In the Khidr story, Moses is shocked and taken aback by the injustices and suffering instigated by this green-robed, immortal, all-knowing friend of God. As Moses gets in touch with his revulsion and he speaks up, even though that is breaking his agreement not to question. Increasing intensity of anxiety and affect with each deed of Khidr's creates consciousness in the previously compliant ego. Moses, in speaking out, is claiming

his own life and beginning conscious work on his own losses and shame from past trauma.

The events witnessed provide the springboard for grief work. Khidr has in effect, re-traumatized Moses, and provided an opportunity for Moses to learn to tolerate affect. In doing so, Moses could begin the healing of his past trauma and to move towards integration of his repressed Khidr self. The fact that Moses did not keep to his bargain of silence is not an indication of failure. Khizr is archetype, divine, and no mortal could hope to sustain a long interaction with the numinous. Moses has come away a winner, for he has a new knowing, a new perspective out of the pain. In another form of a tale of an encounter, Martin Buber had a meeting with a young man who wanted to talk about the meaning of life. Buber later believed he was not fully helpful or present with the young man. When Buber learned of the latter's death, the relationship became a painful inspiration for Buber's pivotal theology of the importance of meeting as an "I -Thou" relationship.

Khidr's final act in their meeting is to give Moses the answers that reveal the meaning of the three disturbing events. Khidr is able to truly meet with Moses and a new awareness, born out of this relationship in the integration of Khidr's higher wisdom and Moses' perceived reality, is an act of consciousness that causes a profound shift. The Khidr myth is about making meaning from suffering. The ego has become aware of the self and reality in a new way, through the open channel between the real and the transpersonal. The following section of Sura 18, in which there is mention of Dhu'lQarnayn at the end of time, is consistent with fairy tale scripts that tell of the Hero's going to an endless time of living happily ever after.

The suffering in the Khidr myth echoes the emptiness and longing of the childless fairytale couple whose life is incomplete. There is a deep longing in the ego

for the split-off part, for the wise and angelic immortal part of the self that Khidr represents. The longing is not limited to the ego, the Moses of the myth, for Khidr is also affected. Destined to wander the earth alone until the end of time, Khidr is drawn to the union with mortal humanity. Allah's angelic wisdom is incarnate in Khidr, not unlike God's compassion being incarnate in Jesus. Khidr is the patient's feeling function separate from the intellect and the embodied ego, the part of self that has been doomed to wander or be held prisoner in a door-less tower. For the patient who has been traumatized in early childhood, the split-off part, when suddenly encountered, is experienced as magical, mysterious, and powerfully attractive. An attraction with erotic qualities is decidedly part of the experience, as when the prince's heart is captured upon spying fair Rapunzel in her tower. The longing is for unity of the parts of the psyche, the wedding of the prince with fair damsel, the alchemical hierogamos and psychological coniunctio mysteriorum.

We tend to experience and propitiate traumatic experiences as if they were divine, and that we do this, to use Winnicott's language, because a trauma is an event whose overwhelming pain cannot be experienced within the area of omnipotence, that is, cannot be symbolized. The slow evolution of symbolic metaphors seems to be the only way severe trauma can be healed, says Mogenson (quoted in Kalsched, 1996, p. 77).

Overwhelming events, events which cannot be incorporated into the life we have imagined for ourselves, cause the soul to bend back on itself, to commit 'incest' with itself, and to revert to the heretical modes of the primary principle. Like the festering process which removes the sliver from a wound, the traumatized imagination works and re-works its metaphors until the events which have 'pierced' it can be viewed in a more benign fashion. The traumatized soul is a theologizing soul. (Mogenson, quoted in Kalsched, 1996, p.77).

Kalsched believes that the “primary principle” Mogenson refers to is the mythopoetic strata of the unconscious. This level is where Khidr is encountered. It is where “our internal object-relations shade over into what Jung described as the mythical or ‘imago’ level” (Kalsched, 1996, p. 77). A most helpful construct for understanding Khidr as Moses’ projection and the transformation of developmental trauma is found in the theory of Melanie Klein.

Klein and Khidr

The Khidr myth is unsettling to the hearer who travels with the hopeful Moses only to be met with deeply disturbing and seemingly senseless events. The mood of our hero is anxious, impatient, overwhelmed, even outraged. Moses is unable to tolerate the ambiguity of the higher self’s paradoxical guiding presence. The dynamic psychological state of this myth’s hero is one that fits the description of Melanie Klein’s (Segal, 1994) structural concept of positions. The development of a child in Klein’s theory is a movement from the paranoid-schizoid phase to the depressive position. The immature ego of the infant is exposed to anxiety from birth as a conflict between the life instinct and the death instinct. When the ego is faced with the death instinct, anxiety is produced. It was Moses’ hope of avoiding death by finding Khidr and the water of eternal life that motivated Moses to go out into unknown territory. “Against the overwhelming anxiety of annihilation, the ego evolves a series of mechanisms of defence” (p. 26), in this case Moses projection of Khidr as life and knowledge, as well as introjection of his own badness in his mortality and lack of wisdom.

Moses’ libido is projected outwards as an ideal object in the form of the all-knowing, immortal Khidr. “As the death instinct is projected outwards, to ward

off the anxiety aroused by containing it, so the libido is also projected, in order to create an object which will satisfy the ego's instinctive striving for the preservation of life" (Segal, 1994, p. 25). The anxiety results in a splitting of the ego (Moses) in its relationship to two parts, the projected persecutory imaged (death) and the ideal image or "ideal breast" (Khidr) in Klein's construct (p. 26). It is the leading anxiety, which is paranoid and the state of the ego and its objects characterized by the splitting, which is schizoid, of this early position of development that led Klein to call it the Paranoid-Schizoid position.

Moses' splitting creates an increasing idealization of the ideal object, Khidr, so that Khidr as immortal, represents is the polar opposite of death. It is extremely interesting to note that for Klein, "in adult life these mechanisms lead to lack of discrimination between good and bad as bad objects have to be idealized" (p. 27) in the omnipotent denial of affect too intense to be borne. One of the characteristics of Khidr and his counterparts in mythology is being beyond good and evil. The Paranoid-Schizoid position is important in human development in the organization of the good versus evil split. It is precisely the splitting that Moses exhibits that "allows the ego to emerge out of chaos and to order its experiences" (p. 35). This is the basis for what later becomes "the faculty of discrimination, the origin of which is the early differentiation between good and bad" (p. 35).

Projective identification is another mechanism of defense that evolves from the original projection of the death instinct. "Projective identification has manifold aims: it may be directed towards the ideal object to avoid separation, or it maybe directed towards the bad object to gain control of the source of danger" according to Klein (Segal, 1994, p. 27). In the myth, Moses is compelled to follow Khidr at all costs. The two things the hero, as ego, is trying to avoid death (the persecutory

object) and separation from Khidr (the ideal object). The depressive position is linked with the experience of dependence on the object; thus we see Moses repeatedly trying to tolerate Khidr's ambiguity and the painful feelings evoked by Khidr's actions. To defend against the ambivalence of wanting to avoid the pain of being with the object and still not lose the object of Khidr, Moses as ego, experiences further splitting.

As an infant develops, there is a tendency towards integration as well as towards splitting. This fosters a new phase of development which Klein calls the depressive position. The depressive position has been defined by Klein as "that phase of development in which the infant recognizes a whole object and relates himself to this object" (Segal, 1994, p. 68). This recognition of Khidr as a being apart from himself is the end result of Moses' journey. Moses must separate from his ideal object. At the same time a new understanding of the traumatic events he has witnessed is realized. This realization is akin to the infant realizing that the mother as an ideal object is, in fact, a separate individual person who leads her own life. Klein believes that "with this altered perception of the object, there is a fundamental change in the ego" (p. 68).

As the mother becomes a whole object, so the infant's ego becomes a whole ego and is less and less split into its good and bad components" (Segal, 1994, pp. 68-69). This concept provides us with a workable psychological understanding the transformation and re-birth imagery of the myth. The journey is towards wholeness. The fears of annihilation and of the loss of the good object are experienced as anxiety and suffering by the ego, Moses. As the infant's ego develops, it struggles with anxieties and moves towards the depressive position. Its working through is accompanied by a radical alteration of his view of reality. Moses, as ego in an encounter with the numinous Self, experiences a profound shift in his perception of

events. As Moses, as ego, becomes more integrated, he is able distinguish between fantasy and external reality.

Summary

The journey towards individuation is one that involves patience and commitment to self, just as Moses committed himself to Khidr in the face of intolerable acts. The myth of Khidr reflects the words of Louise Cowan, “The comic terrain is a world in which people must keep going, must ‘endure.’ And if they do keep going, whether in hope or desperation, they finally, so to speak, catch the bus” (1984, p. 17).

This chapter takes the Khidr myth into the domain of psychological theory from three perspectives. First, existential and theological aspects of suffering and meaning are considered against the intolerable affect experienced by Moses in the presence of Khidr. Second, the transformation of early childhood trauma is discussed as a means of understanding the myth in the method of using fairy tales as psychological metaphor as suggested by Donald Kalsched. Third, Melanie Klein’s conceptualization of development and integration of split-off parts of the self as the movement from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position are shown to be a means of understanding the perplexing journey of Moses as the ego with Khidr as the ideal object. Fourth, initiation as a necessary stage in the individuation process is explored as a therapeutic re-frame of analysis and containment for work with addiction, based on Sam Naifeh’s model (1994). Understanding events that create pain requires telling of the experience.

The myth of Khidr is re-told repeatedly, in many forms as well as every Friday in the mosque. The more clearly the myth is seen in the events that are

“psychologized” (Hillman, 1975, p. 142), that is, “seen through” to gain a new perspective, “the more mysterious and enigmatic they become, even as they become more and more revealed” (p. 143). The nature of transformative encounter, when and where it occurs, and who is present to beckon us through when the doors of perception open, is a long-standing interest of mine. The next chapter will enter Khidr’s own landscape.

Chapter 8 The Landscape of Transformative Encounter

“Psychotherapy is always at least liminoid”
(Robert Moore 1991a)

Transitional space is not contiguous or even continuous with the Cartesian or Euclidean space of transitional reality, but is interwoven seamlessly with it; it can be lifted out only for the sake of conceptualization.

(Susan Deri, quoted in Grolnick & Barkin, 1988)

Crossroads as Temenos

The place of transformation is, first of all, a temenos, a sacred space. In the physical where the holy ones are known to appear, with the hope of experiencing the blessing conferred world, sacred space has been recognized as numinous, unique, set apart for specified actions and states of mind such as prayer or initiation. Purification and surrender of self are connected to entering the temenos. In India, spiritual pilgrims travel to visit the sites in divine encounter. The place where this occurs may be a sangam, where two rivers come together; recalling the place Moses seeks “where two seas meet” in Sura 18. It may also be a special grove or mountain, a place where gods have been known come to earth and the world of the divine touches the world of mortal beings.

The place is a holy place, a meeting place. A crossroads in ancient Greece was honored by gifts left by a “Herm,” a stone erected to represent the god Hermes. This is a form of perception, a “Seeing” as in a “darshan” (Eck, 1981, p. 68). Embodied in this is the idea that what catches the eye may inspired a change of mind. Thus we see that for centuries in other cultures, entering a crossroads carries a sense of temenos, and an expectation of encounter and change, much as the psychotherapy office does today.

The crossroads experience is the psychological terrain of transformation. The situation in which it occurs is typically one of decision and life-crisis, a place where the road divides to offer a new way of proceeding in life. The conjunction of time, space, and choice is called a trivium in Greek mythology. It is a place where three (tri-) roads (via) meet and also separate (Ronan, 1992, p. 4).

The story of Khidr and Moses is a story of encounter at the trivia. A choice is to be made at the crossroads with Khidr, the “place of the middle” where the tryst occurs. The traveler may continue on his old way, or go off in another, unknown direction with the stranger. Moses chooses to move out into unknown territory with an otherworldly stranger, whose actions are shocking and bizarre. The seemingly base, and amoral actions occur are later revealed to have divine meaning. Though Moses’ efforts to bear with the intolerable ambiguity fail, he is able to reach a new perspective. There is potential for transformation in this special space. What is the psychological nature of this landscape?

It is my thesis that in this mutative location, approaching the ever-changing threshold of unconscious, something exciting may transpire. An unexpected brush against a total stranger may leave one’s life forever altered. The mythological Khidr, to whom I refer as an archetype of the crossroads, is an integral part of a certain aspect of psychological transformation. Khidr is encountered in altered consciousness, in “the where beyond the here and the here beyond the where” (Mason, 1998). I propose to stay with images of altered time and space in order to learn more about encountering the Other, the Self in moments of psychological transformation.

Interestingly, although the modern word “trivia” has come to mean unimportant and obscure facts, it is within the center of this encounter with obscure and seemingly base and ordinary knowledge that is the place where an important

change in direction may be made. Our concern with analytic procedure is, in fact, one of theoria, a beholding of the base, the lowly, as a revelatory image (Edinger, 1996, p. 113). In the paradoxical dictum of the alchemists the gold is found in the basest material, the prima materia. The trivia of the crossroads may appear at first to be trivial, seeming unimportant, yet it provides the stage for psychological change. It is also a place of possibility, the possibility of an important encounter. Arriving at this spot also calls the soul to let go of old ways of knowing.

The definition of liminality I am working with here is a borderline space, from the Latin limen, from the limen stone of the threshold, psychological liminality is a state in which “a person’s sense of identity is hung in suspension” (Turner, 1967). A middle ground between the conscious and unconscious world is described as “betwixt and between” by van Gennep in The Rites of Passage (1908/1960). His work addresses psychic change in initiates in rites of passage but is concerned with social relationship more than the experience that occurs between different forms of consciousness or knowing and chaos and introduces the term, “liminal.” Turner (1982) states that he has tried to revert to van Gennep’s earlier usage of the term “passage,” as more the processual form than exclusively in connection with “life-crisis” rituals (p. 24). Van Gennep distinguishes three phases in a rite of passage: separation, transition, and incorporation. The first phase of separation clearly demarcates sacred time and space from profane or secular place and time. Turner says that it is more than just a matter of entering a temple. There must be in addition, a rite, which changes the quality of time also, or constructs a cultural realm, which is defined as “out of time” that is, beyond or outside the time, which measures secular processes and routines.

The shimmering borderlands of psyche's outer limits provide insight, as we turn to an approach known as a "topoanalysis," a word coined by Bachelard (1958/1994) for "the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives" (p. 8). A sense of encounter with a strange, transformative figure may occur in dreams, in altered states of consciousness, or in the therapy room, as a client's spontaneous "aha" moment evoked by a reframing of events. It may occur at times of crisis, fatigue, illness, or disorientation when the threshold of the conscious is compromised. At the border of the unconscious, in the realm of the liminoid, a sudden awareness breaks through. The image of place is unmistakable. A sense of timelessness is characteristic of the boundary experience.

The landscape of Khidr, of transformation and liminal consciousness, may be imagined as a land where there is darkness and a winding path. Dante tells of an underworld landscape of encounter where images of the unconscious become reality. "In the middle of the journey of our life, I came to my senses in a dark forest." So opens The Divine Comedy (Huse, 1954, p. 7), where lack of consciousness led the hero to find himself in the Inferno. "I cannot tell how I entered it, so heavy with slumber was I at the moment when I abandoned the true way" (p. 7). Virgil is guide and mentor for Dante's hero, just as Khidr is Moses' psychopomp and Elijah/Philemon met Jung in his unconscious. The modern psychotherapeutic relationship is resonant with the archetypal image of the underworld wisdom figure.

In India, a place where two rivers conjoin is called a "sangam," a marriage, and is believed to be a "tirqua," a holy place where the gods come down to directly mingle with humans (Eck, 1981). Moses is totally focused on his objective of finding the "place of the middle," the madjam al-bahrain, "the place where the two seas meet." This special place is also called "the confluence of the two oceans," the goal

of Alexander the Great in his legendary journey with Khidr to the point where East meets West. This place is strongly reminiscent of the alchemical “Polar Opposites,” of a threshold zone where consciousness flows up against the unconscious, where secular reality touches the divine, life encounters death, and encounters with archetypal forms may occur.

In the physical realm, in India, pilgrims travel to visit the sites where the holy resides, for the purposes of experiencing the blessing conferred in encountering the holy. This is called “darshan,” from the Sanskrit word for “seeing,” especially seeing the divine in an image in a person or a set of ideas. Embodied in this is the idea that what catches the eye may inspire a change of mind. The powerful places where the images of the holy are situated are called tirthas, sacred “fords” or “crossings.” Tirtha is conceptually the counterpart of the avatari, used to describe divine descents of the gods. Avatari comes from a variation of the verbal root the word meaning, “to cross over,” and precisely at these places where the gods have “crossed down” into this world are the tirthas where the earthly pilgrims can make their spiritual crossings (Eck, 1981, p. 68).

Psychological landscape reflects Louise Cowan’s idea of literary generic territories, each “ruled by its own laws, analogically related to life but different from daily experience. The vision of the individual work emerges in this space, and the warping of the space that typifies the genre governs the kind of art through which it may be expressed” (1984, p. 8). In art, or the epic journey of the soul there is a location which seems to have its own territorial laws, a “warped space” in which transformation can occur (p. 8).

In locating the experience of the sacred encounter of the archetypal soul-guide, we might think about “inner genre” as applied to the terrain of literature (Cowan,

laws of the land, of one is willing to grant the existence of a territory of the imagination” (p. 8). These stories allow entry into the realm of the “mutative metaphor” (Cox & Theilgaard, 1987, p...), the “dark forest” of Dante’s Divine Comedy (Huse, 1954), where ones hopes that a Virgil will be encountered. In modern literature and film as well as mythology, altered consciousness is described as a landscape, a world between the ordinary world and the underworld. Holding this concept of the psychological landscape in mind, we shall examine some stories of encounters that occur in the betwixt and the between.

Encounters of the Liminal Kind

This is not a phenomenological study, but it is useful to incorporate some examples of stories that illustrate the characteristics of an encounter with Khidr. The following accounts are from folklore, fiction, and personal experiences that left profound impressions on the persons involved. Each of them reveals a characteristic of Khidr. What they reveal helps us to differentiate Khidr from other archetypal figures in the mythological world.

“Events that haunt you often turn out to be what Bion, like Hume, calls “constant conjunctions... moments of unknowable conceptions, inviting exploration of their resonance” (Rhode, 1994, p. 33). Listening to a personal account of a Khidr encounter was the constant conjunction or mythic moment that caught my attention and moved me to begin a decades-long involvement with this myth. A story about a stranger’s unexpected actions, which opened a new perspective, moved me to explore this archetype. I heard this tale in a classroom many years prior to this writing, told by Herbert Mason, professor of religion and literature at Boston University. The context was a lecture on the meaning of the strange tale of Khidr and the fish.

Herbert Mason, professor of religion and literature at Boston University. The context was a lecture on the meaning of the strange tale of Khidr and the fish.

In 1968, Mason was visiting the site of the Cave of the Seven Sleepers in Ephesus, Turkey, when a bearded, man in brown robes appeared and handed him a loaf of bread and two oranges. A few words were uttered by this strange figure, which were translated for Mason as, "I had a dream. You will fly on an airplane to tell the West of the one true God." Mason says that he remembers standing there, unwilling to take the gifts, until a friend said, "You have to take them!" Mason took the bread and the oranges and felt at that moment his consciousness had been altered.

After many years of teaching and publishing works on Islamic mysticism, Mason said, "My entire perception of Islam had somehow been opened in a way that was not possible before. Anne-Marie Schimmel, the Islamic scholar, later told me that she believed it was a meeting with Khidr." Not only did Mason receive the orange and the bread, but, as Schimmel helped him to realize, he was given the khirqā, the spiritual mantle of the Sufis (personal communication, 1997).

There are three important characteristics of Khidr to be noted here. First, the delayed recognition of whom one has been with. The "who was that masked man" reaction, as with Moses when he realized he has passed the place he has been looking for, is often associated with Khidr. Second is the use of real objects. Mason explains that Khidr uses real objects, such as the fish, and the water bowl mentioned in Sufi poetry, hence the gift of fruit and bread (personal communication, 1998). Third, Khidr leaves a gift, perhaps the form of a new perspective.

The gift may take the form of new energy for life, receive a precious treasure, in the gift offered in a gesture, a word, a look. The choice of whether to take the gift is always open. The meaning of it, the questions it stirs in the soul are then to be dealt

with. The unveiling of the gift is most certainly the place, the specific province of soul tending.

These images of Khidr and the gifts are archetypal symbols of “mythological aura” which, as Jung says,

portray the centralizing process or the production [that is, making conscious] of a new center of the personality....I call this center the ‘self.’ The image is most clarified and significant to the personality when it appears during an inner search as during an analysis, or a quest for meaning going in depth beyond the limits of the known, as in the experience of the alchemists. (quoted in Perry, 1953, p. 137)

This is the place for the Native American shaman who interprets the experience of a young man’s vision quest. This is the role of the spiritual director and the depth psychologist who can “read” the writing on the wall, the dream, and the hermeneutics of the mythic moment.

Khidr uses not only real objects, but also real places. The location of the encounter is a bridge between the ordinary world and the world of ideas. The cave at Ephesus is more than a symbolic reference to incubation in the Qur’anic story, but a real, physical location of temenos. It is the “place of the middle,” “the critical place” which Jung says “is alluded to in the symbolic preamble of the story of the Seven Sleepers” ((Jung, 1950/1980a, p. 135). It is the “middle” between the sun’s rising and setting, that is “the center where the treasure is preserved, or where the incubation or sacrificial rite or transformation takes place” (Jung, 1939/1944, p. 16). This is the abode of Khidr.

A characteristic feature of this place is that its light is that of the midnight sun, since the evening prayer of Islam is unknown there, dawn occurring before the sun has set. Transformation of the soul can occur in a certain place, according to Ibn al-‘Arabi and the Sufi mystics of Islam. “In the cosmic North, the ‘emerald rock’ at

the summit of the cosmic mountain of Khaf," (Corbin, 1960/1977, pp. 71-72). The middle is the North Pole, land of the midnight sun, which is not even on the maps, also known as "Hyperborea, the place of the East at the top, the true Orient" (p. 72). What could better describe the betwixt and between, the liminal shores where the tides of the unconscious sweep the conscious shore? Allusions to this archetypal place occur throughout the world.

The sun was shining on the sea:
Shining with all his might,
He did his very best to make
The billows smooth and bright-
And this was odd, because it was
The middle of the night.

(Carroll, 1995, p. 30).

A gift from a stranger encountered in darkness is the theme of "The Night Traveler," a poem by Mary Oliver which captures the feeling of a meeting with Khidr, the mysterious Green One, or any of his unexpected forms. Oliver evokes the event as an off-guard moment of encounter as you lean, half-asleep, on the sill of your window of consciousness, to see the elusive stranger stopping by your gate with the gift of transformative possibility.

Passing by, he could be anybody;
A thief, a tradesman, a doctor
On his way to a worried house.
But when he stops by your gate,
Under the room where you lie half-asleep,
You know it is not just anyone--
It is the Night Traveler.

You lean your arms on the sill
And stare down. But all you see
Are bits of wilderness attached to him--
Twigs, loam and leaves,
Vines and blossoms. Among these

You feel his eyes, and his hands
Lifting something in the air.

He has a gift for you, but it has no name.
It is windy and woolly.
He holds it in the moonlight, and it sings
Like a newborn beast,
Like a child at Christmas,
Like your own heart as it tumbles
In love's green bed.
You take it, and he is gone.

All night - and all your life, if you are willing--
It will nuzzle your face, cold-nosed,
Like a small, white wolf;
It will curl in your palm
Like a hard blue stone;
It will liquefy into a cold pool
Which, when you dive into it,
Will hold you like a mossy jaw.
A bath of light. An answer.

(Oliver, 1979, p. 70).

The encounter occurs at the window, the symbolic threshold to the darkness, the unknowability of the unconscious. The image of the pool suggests the water of transformation and the renewal of Khidr's hidden spring. The pool holds light of consciousness. The hard blue stone is most remarkable, for it is living, and functions as the Philosopher's Stone of alchemical transmutation. Oliver's (1983) poem "Flying," cited in part in my introductory chapter, gives clear evidence that the poetess knows this sort of sweet wrenching of soul. There is an indescribable, erotic fragrance left lingering after the encounter, a felt sense of wind from the stars.

A description of a Khidr experience might include the phrase "erotics of encounter," used by Jane Gallop. Her call for an "erotics of encounter," for a way of knowing that takes into consideration how one is moved by the object one desires to know (quoted in Romanyshyn, 1991, p. 20). The desire to meet Khidr is the

motivation for Moses to make the quest. It appears that upon encountering such a stranger there is a stirring of emotions, unbidden Eros (in the sense of Eros as the God of relationships) that makes following him, unquestioningly, anywhere seem to be a rational decision.

Angeles Arrien (1994) tells a haunting story of an encounter with a stranger. A certain erotic familiarity strikes the listener in the dark appeal of this unknown man. He appears in the heroine's life unexpectedly, and cloaks himself with attractive mystery. He arrives at a time when the heroine is giving a party in her home to celebrate her successful life. She is unable to resist his charms and goes off in his car with him, leaving her guests without any explanation. Together, they go up to the top room of the tower in his house and begin to dance. The music is eerie sounding to the woman, and she begins to wonder why she has come to this place with this stranger. She suddenly sees that he is a skeleton, the image of death. The eerie song continues to play, leaving a sense of shock and confusion.

The after-images of Arrien's story leave a sense of stickiness in the mind. I find it interesting that the Hebrew word for "sticky," dibbuk, is the same root word as the Yiddish word dybbuk, for demon. The story is of an excursion into the liminal zone, the imaginal realm where anything can happen. Psychologically, one might say that when things were going so well for the heroine that she was caught up with her own success (ego inflation) she was lured to the door of her consciousness by a projection of her Self. The dark stranger was her repressed shadow, the male animus that put her back in touch with her own mortality.

Kabbalistic and Chassidic tales are rich with this genre of stories that teach of strange and otherworldly happenings at times of illness, distress, half-sleep, in graveyards and on the road beyond the limits of the town. Here is an excellent

illustration of a tale of an encounter in liminality from the collective, found in Jewish folklore (Schwartz, 1993a, pp. 101-102).

Hayim Vital, a rabbi in Safed, Israel, was awakened at midnight by the voice of the wind calling to him. He got up and let the voice lead him to a crossroads, where he saw his dead father and two departed sages. He realized he was in the Kingdom of the Dead. Vital then saw an old man dressed like a dervish--a hermit, traveling alone and singing songs of sublime beauty about the coming of the Messiah in a haunting voice. The sun began to shine, even though it was many hours until dawn. Vital turned to look at the old man as he departed, but he had already disappeared. Then Hayim Vital woke up. This hermit figure appears in folklore as the eternal Elijah, the Jewish archetype of healing and wisdom, which, like Khidr is apt to appear at crossroads and the threshold of the unconscious. This crossroads story evokes the otherworldly, enigmatic and often unsettling feeling of unanswered questions that entering the realm of transformative archetypes can create. In psychological terms, this may describe the state I am referring to as liminality.

John Weir Perry (1953) works the edges of the unconscious with psychotic patients, and speaks to the nature of the liminal state of encounter. "Only at unusual times when constellated by a situation of conflict, stress, puzzlement, or profound stirring, particularly in such turmoil's as religious experiences or psychotic episodes" do images of 'self' make their appearance in individuals" (p. 137).

In the examples given above, however, there is no indication that there is a crisis, yet the encounter occurs with a sense of liminality, or altered consciousness. It is perhaps possible, given the autonomous nature of an archetype, that the constellation of the figure brings with it the mists and timelessness of the liminal zone? In other words, a need arise for compensation of an unbalanced ego state. The

archetype responds to that need, constellates a form, is perceived by the conscious ego, and the proximity of the numinous archetype creates the sense of the liminal. In effect, meeting an angelic being such as Khidr produces the liminal state and procures a brief entry into the world beyond Mt. Khaf.

Khidr has a characteristic of a regenerative figure, symbolically cloaked in green to suggest life and green, growing plants. This base, earthy, quality of Khidr is recognizable in a dream reported by the film producer, Fellini.

I am the Director of an airport. A very large plane filled with passengers lands in the middle of the night. One of the passengers strikes me more than the others. He's wearing a fancy, worn kimono which gives him a stately, raggedy appearance. Everything about him shows and is, in contrast, like him [sic]. The definitely Mongolian Oriental features express great, regal, and miserable dignity. It could be the face of an emperor, of a prophet, of a Saint, but also one of a gypsy, of a wayfarer, of a strolling player who's become indifferent to disdain and suspicion through long habit of mortification and misery. His hands hidden in the long sleeves of his kimono, his eyes closed, the foreigner waits my decision in silence. I am overcome by an indefinable feeling. This character fascinates me and communicates a kind of restlessness I cannot control. The passenger is motionless, standing straight in front of me with his greasy, dirty hair...with the kind of smell vagabond have...the ugly smell of wet rags, of soaked leaves, of dirt. And at the same time, with that strange, disturbing, aristocratic glow. He opposes my discomfort and very emotional insecurity with the definite unequivocal [sic] reality of his arrival and presence. What should I do? The man doesn't speak, doesn't ask for any intervention, doesn't ask questions; he just waits calmly with the confidence of someone identifying himself with an unavoidable event of destiny. It's true. The circumstance doesn't concern him, it concerns me. (quoted in Stein, 1983, pp. 48-49)

This liminal figure creates a most impressive effect. The mystery of the Khidr of the East and the silence, the waiting, a sense of discomfort some sort of poignant meaning being held in secret until the right moment. These qualities appear repeatedly with the Khidr encounter. There is another aspect here though and that is this image of the raw, vegetable quality of the liminal figure, fecund and fermenting with life.

This quality is found in the alchemy as primal matter, and in depth psychology, as the gold in the shadow, the shit under which the treasure is hidden. The leafy-faced Green Man figure from ancient mythology, seen as an architectural embellishment in Europe, is perhaps the one most familiar to the Western mind. The vegetation god Green Man, a figure only distantly related to the Khidr of the Islamic world (see my discussion on Anderson's Green Man in Chapter 3).

The image of the airport is associated with transition and change, and we remember that the archetypal gods who parallel Khidr; Hermes and Mercury rule travel. To travel is to go to the crossroads, where Jewish legend tells us we may meet Elijah. It is the in between area where the traveler is made vulnerable by jetlag and fatigue. The defenses are lowered and objects and people normally passed by and overlooked are out of proportion. Now in our face, they are perhaps truly seen.

Archetypal images do appear at times of crisis just as Perry (1953) states. A modern myth of a young heroine who is in crisis is seen in a recent film, A Price above Rubies (1998). She has a series of encounters with a strange old woman while she is temporarily disengaged from reality and gradually finds herself in a new lifestyle. The setting is contemporary Borough Park, New York, an ultra-Orthodox Jewish community and home of Sonia, the story's heroine.

In this Isaac Bashevis Singer-like tale, the heroine's world is modeled after Chasidic life in 18th-century Central Europe. The story portrays the archetypal struggle of leaving a familiar world to move towards a new and unknown way of life. Sonia, played by Zellweger, is the unhappy wife of Mendel Horowitz, a devout and single-minded religious scholar. After taking a job in the diamond district as a jewelry buyer, she is strangely drawn to a carved gold ring that eventually leads her to take its creator, a Hispanic sculptor, as her lover. Sonia finds herself estranged from her

husband and child, and shunned by her community. Out on the street, with nowhere to go, disoriented, she is encountered by a street woman who shares her grapes and shelter in an abandoned loft for the night. Over a bucket of burning coals, the old one tells an ancient folktale to impart her wisdom to the young woman. Sonia awakes at dawn with new resolve, only to see that street woman has disappeared.

The psychological landscape of Sonia's unhappiness is infiltrated by intimations of another reality. The heroine's journey is replete with liminal encounters with mentors, wisdom figures, and guiding spirits in 20th-century guise. In situations of stress, the ghost of Yossi, Sonia's brother who drowned in childhood, appears to talk with her. An unnamed, bizarrely dressed street woman intrudes on Sonia's thoughts at crucial moments. This character, referring to herself as "an old woman that has been walking so long on tired feet," is a repository of knowledge that extends beyond the ordinary world. The heroine is shifted in her liminal experiences, from a former lifestyle into a new one, without a conscious working through of the issues at hand.

The encounter with the Self in this liminal state is what Jung called an "Auseinandersetzung," and the Greeks called "metanoia." The encounter brings a change of orientation. Through this experience a new sense of self may emerge (Hollis, 1998, p. 31). As with Saul on Tarsus in the New Testament, there may be a complete conversion of the personality. His experience on the road to Damascus involving a visionary encounter with Jesus produced a 180-degree turn in life direction. Saul totally reversed his conscious attitude. This testimony speaks of the gift of change, of re-structuring old, on-sided ways of thinking and being accompanying the Khidr encounter. Corbett (1996) refers to this incident as an

example of the “power of the numinousum to restructure established psychological structures” (p. 19).

Robert Romanyshyn (1996) describes this feeling in an encounter on the threshold with an elderly gentleman. The stranger’s unexpected, sweeping gesture of allowing passage opened the door to a different perception, and created a momentary vision of altered reality and meaning. Romanyshyn writes of how an old man, with white hair, at the door of a coffee shop, “ushered me across the threshold and into my day....something like a small miracle happened, and I have remembered that moment, that brief moment, these long years. The gesture, like the old man’s sweep of his arm, is the outline of a world, the chiseling of what is otherwise a neutral space into a significant space” (p. 1). The encounter in the doorway is a wonderful metaphor for the role that Khidr plays. This brief account illustrates the gift that comes with the unexpected contact with an “Other,” a gift of meaningfulness, and an opening up of perception to even the most insignificant detail of being.

The special quality of this sense of liminality that I am attempting to delineate, or given its nonlinear aspect, to “circumscribe,” is found in Freud’s recurrent dream of a sandstone wall in Padua, Italy (Bollas, 1992, pp. 11-12). This wall, a real object of perception, became an object within Freud’s unconscious and within the sandstone wall became a mysterious figure in Freud’s dream world so that when he saw it in reality again years later, it had a different quality from everything else on the street. Bollas (p. 18) says that

we live among thousands of such objects, which are not hallucinations, nor are they intrinsic to what Lacan calls the real. Their meaning resides in what Winnicott termed ‘intermediate space’ or the ‘third area’; the place where subject meets thing to confer significance in the very moment that is being transformed by the object.

Psychologically, locating the place of transformation encompasses and exceeds the Cartesian view of time and space where minds and bodies meet for a 50-minute hour in an office (Bollas, p. 18).

Psychological Explorations

In Playing and Reality, Winnicott (1994, p. 96) asked himself the question “where does it happen?” Regarding play in therapy because he realized, “it is neither a matter of inner psychic reality nor a matter of external reality (p. 96).” If it is neither inside nor outside, where is it? Winnicott looks at transitional phenomena and how the use of an object symbolizes the union of two now separate things (baby and mother). The baby uses a symbol of union to increasingly allow and even benefit from separation. This is the place of “a separation that is not a separation,” (p. 98) which he relates an image which I find particularly striking; the “tremendous significance of the interplay between the edges of two curtains” (p. 98). It is in this area of transitional phenomena that cultural experience exists. This area of potential space between the individual and the environment (originally the object, or mother) is where play first begins, and where Winnicott believes the individual deepens and life takes on meaning.

Surprise is another characteristic of the encounter with Khidr. As we recall, surprise is also identified with Khidr’s Greek counterpart, Hermes. Bollas (1992) says that, “we are played upon by the inspiring arrival of the unselected, which often yields a very special type of pleasure....that of surprise. It opens us up, liberating an area like a key fitting a lock. In such moments we can say that objects use us, in respect of that inevitable two-way interplay between self and object world and between desire and surprise” (p. 37).

The “area of experience” or “area of illusion,” where Winnicott locates play as an important function in developmental psychology, is important from the archetypal

perspective as well. Rosemary Gordon (1985) tells us in "Losing and Finding: The Location of Archetypal Experience," that

while psychological growth and maturity consists in the withdrawal of archetypal themes, images, and motifs from actual objects and persons—including one's self- to which they have become attached as a result of the processes of projection, incorporation, and identification, they must not be totally superseded and eliminated. A very important function which they can fulfill is "to enrich the inner world, enliven it, activate imagination, restore a sense of the wondrous, the awesome the mysterious, the poetic, and so enhance the sense of being truly and meaningfully alive." (pp. 118-119)

The place of transformation is the "listening landscape," a Heideggerian "clearing" where the surprise quality of the unconscious can manifest itself (Cox & Theilgaard (1987). In the metaphoric therapy of the Aeolian mode, it is an elusive, poetic place, where, as a friend once said to me, "I need to go where the winds blow clean the honeycombs of my mind." A fundamental shift in consciousness can occur with in a metaphor, poetry or song, or a gesture. Here we do not speak of time or linear space, but move into the atemporal regions of Orpheus and the gods, where the psychopomp, Hermes is in attendance.

To facilitate the transformative process or *poesis* in therapy, the use of language, metaphor as a dynamic has been found effective (Cox & Theilgaard, 1987). This is a way of allowing the moment, the space for the transcendent function, to occur not in the framework of linear perspective and time as a distance point, but including the therapist in the process. I believe this is the action of the unconscious, appearing in the realms of creativity, the divine, and madness.

Arieti (1976, pp. 154-155) speaks of this artistic reality as the phenomenon of "as if it is an adualism" which is also operative in schizophrenia and dreams. He cites Dante's use of words to create images to be perceived and felt as a second

reality. In the *Inferno*, Dante's invective against Pisa for its unjust punishment of Ugolino:

The islands of Capraia and Gorgona must move
and hedge up the Arno River at its mouth,
so that every living soul be drowned in thee.
(Huse, 1954, p. 159)

In the mind of the poet and of his readers, the islands move. Dante succeeded in concretizing his feeling in an image fit for a supernatural power; that is, he was able to transform impossibility into an actual image that has a real artistic effect. Unlike the schizophrenic who is adualistic because he cannot distinguish between the world of the mind and external reality, the artist is not dreaming or delusional. He knows that there is a difference and therefore a dualism between art and reality, but his artistic work, being both fictitious and real, becomes adualistic. Its life is a life sui generis, as is best exemplified in the theater. The work of art belongs to a second reality, which maintains a certain distance from the first reality.

Dante resorted to an artistic technique in the Divine Comedy: the "as if" phenomenon (Arieti). This is artistic potentiality, which becomes artistic reality. It is this poetic space that create a possibility of vision that superseded our Cartesian dualism and goes back to a time when the window of linear perspective did not create two separate places of the perceiver and the perceived. The place of transformation is a synergistic Mitwelt, a middle realm, and an atemporal moment, encompassing the whole while allowing something more to emerge.

In "Mundis Imaginalis," Corbin (1972) discusses the place where one finds the Self, as described in Suhrawardi's 12th century theology. The place, where one meets Khidr, is called Na-Koja-Abad, which literally means the city, the land of "nonwhere." Utopia (Greek for no-place), the term coined by Thomas More to denote

the absence of any localization, according to Corbin, would be a misinterpretation of the Persian expression Na-Koja-Abad. The place is beyond Mount Khaf, “a place out of space, that is not contained in any other place, in a topos, making it possible to give an answer to the question ‘where’ by a gesture of the hand” (p. 5). From this concept, Corbin continues that there is a world that is both intermediary and intermediate, the world of the image, the mundis imaginalis that is as real as the world of the sense and that of the intellect (p. 7).

The place of the middle is belatedly recognized as the goal of the quest, by Moses, This is indeed the “place where the two seas meet.” The initial oversight of Moses echoes the words of Jacob on the mountain when he realizes that he has experienced a night encounter with the divine being, “Thou, oh God were in this place and I, I knew it not.” Moses must descend further into the unconscious, as he returns to the rock, retraces his steps, in a movement of regression of consciousness. Back at the rock, Khidr is waiting, one might imagine, sitting comfortably in his green robes, a knowing smile on his bearded face.

The place of the middle appears psychologically as shadowy, dark, and confusing. Murray Stein (1983) calls this experience in psychotherapy being “in the muddle” (referring to liminality), and identifies an archetype, a god of change and ambiguity as the presence encountered in midlife crisis. Midlife is an excellent example of the place and time when a Khidr figure may be met. “The archetype that is represented by the Greek god Hermes reflects a sensed presence of the unconscious whenever life throws us into the state of liminality. Liminality triggers it into functioning” (p. 8).

The I occupies no clearly defined psychological location. Confusion and disorientation reign.

Time warps. There is an unusual degree of vulnerability to sudden emotional “drafts” originating either within or without, to sudden moods and to highly charged images and thoughts. Inner ground shifts, and because the base is not firm a person can easily be influenced, pushed, and blown about. A sudden happening will make a more than normally deep impression, like an imprinting. (Stein, 1983, pp. 8-9)

The experience is unmistakable, unpredictable, and awesome to the freshly shaken soul. Now that we have looked at the quizzical nature of liminal space and archetypal encounter, we shall turn to the time, or time-less moment when it occurs.

When Worlds Collide: The Moment of Encounter.

“What is the instant?” Hallaj was asked.
It is a breeze of joy, (*farja*) blown by pain --and Wisdom is waves which submerges, rise and fall, so that the instant of the Sage is black and obscured”

(*Kalabadhi*, quoted in Mason, 1989, p. 91)

When does a transformative encounter occur? What leads up to the moment? The moment of encountering Khidr is unexpected, but it is the right time, the correct time, the *kairos*, the time of ripeness, in the alchemical sense of the moment of transmutation. An image of transformation often appears, as we have noted, at a life crossroads, when there is a decision to be made. The right time is often in the midst of psychological turmoil when “the ego becomes more permeable to the transpersonal level and more numinous experiences can occur” (Corbett, 1996). The *kairos* can occur in “a chance meeting between two persons,” and in this meeting “the whole of one’s outlook may undergo profound changes” (MacNab, quoted in Cox & Theilgaard, 1987, p. 221).

The alchemical *kairos*, the moment of transmutation, fits with what we know of an encounter with the archetypal aspect of Khidr. When a change in the elements

occurs it is unexpected, non rational, involves waiting unknowingly, and depends on a force above, be it Allah, or the astrological gods. "When something crystallizes depends upon very irrational factors, ...the whole of alchemy depends upon the kairos. One must also consider and wait for the astrological constellation and pray to those planet gods. Kairos therefore means the time when things can turn out successfully" (Von Franz, 1980, p. 44). Is a liminal place for transmutation described by the alchemists? In fact, the entire science of alchemy is liminal, full of symbols from the unconscious and reliant on metaphorical descriptions. This concept of transmutation in alchemy also encompasses a meeting with the Self, the "Other," or the Divine.

The "when" of a Khidr moment is known to speakers of Arabic differently than to native speakers of English and European tongues. Time is perceived and expressed in way that lends uniqueness to Khidr. Attention to the vehicle of thought, the language in which an idea is expressed, gives a clue to the lived reality of the speakers of a given tongue. Evidence in Arabic grammar, poetry, and prose suggests that there is an openness to alternative perception of the world that does not depend wholly upon the rules Western technology and measurement.

The French Islamist, ecumenist and major modern Catholic thinker Louis Massignon enlightens us, saying, "For the Moslem theologian time is not a continuous duration, but a constellation, a galaxy of instants (and similarly there is no space, but only points)" (quoted in Mason, 1989, p. 85). Arabic grammar does not conceive of verbal times" [tenses] as states; in principle it knows only "verbal aspects," the finished and the unfinished which mark, outside of our time, the degree to which the [divine] action has been made real (p. 88). Massignon's own transformative experience with a numinous "Other" in the land of Khidr is described

by Mason (1989, p. 25). Massignon wrote an essay describing the profound nature of his relationship with another spiritual pilgrim of the Arabian Desert, Charles de Foucauld. In his memoir, Massignon describes his personal transformation during a time of crisis. During the Turkish revolution, Massignon was arrested for being a spy, and beaten. He tried to commit suicide, but was halted by an encounter in his prison cell with “an inner fire, a pure, ineffable creative Presence” (quoted in Mason, 1989, p. 25).

In Arabic, “The phrase ‘I come at dawn’ marks an instant, because it announces an imagined event by means of a verifiable event” (Mason, 1989, p. 88). The experience of the moment of meeting Khidr on a pilgrimage to a Moslem shrine in 1193 CE, as related by Ibn ‘Arabi in his book, Futuhat, follows.

I was in a boat in the port of Tunis. I had a pain in my stomach, but the people were sleeping, so I went to the side of the boat and looked out over the sea. Suddenly I saw by the light of the moon, which was full that night, someone was coming towards me on the surface of the water. Finally he came up to me and stood with me. First he stood on one leg and raised the other so that I could see that this leg was not wet. Then he did the same with the other leg. After talking to me for awhile he greeted me and went off, making for a lighthouse on top of a hill over two miles distant from us. This distance he covered in two or three steps. I could hear him praising God on the lighthouse. When I returned to the town a man met me who asked how my night with al-Khidr on the boat had been, what he had said to me and what I had said to him.

(Ibn ‘Arabi, 1971, pp. 28-29)

It may be seen from Ibn ‘Arabi’s account that the experience of an encounter with Khidr feels concrete and yet has uncanny events. We can only speculate the meaning of that image to the Moslem reader. The elements of the journey, the moonlit night, the sea which is Khidr’s domain, and the illness Ibn ‘Arabi was experiencing are characteristic of a liminal encounter, perhaps in a hypnagogic

state of half-sleep or lowered conscious defenses due to travel and illness. For the listener, if a depth psychologist, this material may be analyzed, amplified, and treated as a dream, but the fact remains that Ibn 'Arabi and the Sufis who followed him took this to be a literal event. The numinous quality is literal. Events have lost their ordinary meaning in this experience.

We see that illness, travel, and middle-of-the-night-darkness characterize the moment of liminal encounter. The moment alters the consciousness and one's perception of life ever after. This recalls the words of Paul Bowles (1990), who in The Sheltering Sky, mused about how often in one's limited lifetime one will experience certain poignant events, such as watching the full moon rise. He queried, "How often will you remember the childhood moment that made you inalterably you, the importance of the instant that changed you?" (p. 248). We recall that "events that haunt you often turn out to be what Bion, like Hume, calls constant conjunctions, moments of unknowable conceptions, inviting exploration of their resonance" (Rhode, 1994, p. 33).

In Bowles's novel, three American adventurers set off just after the second World War to explore the North African desert. At the nether point of a long, difficult, journey, Bowles's heroine, Kit, is stunned by the horrible typhoid illness and death of her husband, Port. In shock, the newly widowed woman is left alone to wander in the North African desert, where she meets and joins a camel caravan. The lowering of her defenses in the middle of disorientation, grief, and shock create a temporary psychosis during which she spends several weeks traveling the emptiness of the Sahara as the mistress of a robed Bedouin who speaks no English. Her identity and ego are surrendered and an unlikely encounter occurs, totally altering, almost taking her life. What occurs in these circumstances may be transformative, but may

also lead to death or loss of self, as in a psychosis. Bowles cites Kafka's words, "From a certain point onwards, there is no longer any turning back. That is the point that must be reached" (p. 248).

The time of a liminal encounter is in crisis, grief, shock, disorientation, in the time of death, of others, and facing one's own morality. This moment opens the door for the Khidr. The Gilgamesh Epic, the tale of the hero's tragic loss of his beloved friend, is created out of the grieving heart and the pain of search for answers. The Khidr figure, then, may be understood as the Self, the Wisdom archetype that re-orientes and orders the psyche, giving not answers but new life in the form of new directions to the lost, parched ego wandering in the desert.

There is always potential danger for the solitary wanderer in liminal spaces. The shifting desert sands allow no foothold for the ego consciousness. The road to individuation has no markers, no guarantees. The hero's journey contains rich imagery of enemies, dragons, fearful dark places, and unthinkable creatures to avoid, unless one has a magic talisman. The risk of the journey is real. Each one of us must find an individual path and trust it. The temporary psychosis of Bowles's heroine, Kit, is an example of an encounter gone too far, too long.

Christine Downing (1996) related a dream in which she was lost, looking for a map on the path. She tripped over a root, and the fall caused her to look up and notice a "living clump of branches" by the wayside, and in its branches, what appeared to be a road map. When she took the map, which was just what she needed to find her way, the tree became a wise-looking, bearded man. Some time after the dream, Downing was looking through some books and saw a picture of an author of the cover of one. It was a wise-looking, bearded man named Martin Buber. She recognized the picture as the wise old man in her dream. She took the book and read deeply. "I felt that this

dream had changed my life,” she explained in her lecture. Downing was in her 20s when this dream occurred. Her path from that day turned out to be the study of Buber, the eventual topic of her Ph.D. dissertation.

Once an archetype is constellated the unexpected and provocative connections between the real world and the unconscious become increasingly intertwined. It so happens that Martin Buber also reported a significant, life-altering dream of an encounter. In the beginning of his book, Between Man and Man (German, Zwischensprache), Buber tells that he dreamed of an animal grabbing him, a fight, and then a “crying sound” (Downing, 1996). The biblical Jacob also struggled with an “other,” an angel who wrestling with him in the middle of the night. Buber later wrestled with himself over a real life encounter with a young man. The failed encounter with the young man led Buber to arrive at his theology of “I-Thou.”

In “Parker’s Back,” a short story by Flannery O’Conner (1993), the hero, Parker, is overtaken by a state of altered consciousness as he bales hay in a field. The sun begins to “switch regularly from in front to behind him” (p. 232). His tractor crashes into a tree “reaching out to grab him”(p. 232). The tractor catches fire and Parker is left in a state of confusion. He senses that there has been a great change in his life, “a leap forward into a worse unknown, and that there was nothing he could do about it” (p. 233). Parker then strikes out, in his shocked, liminal mental state, to find a tattoo artist to have an image of the face of a Byzantine Christ with “all-demanding eyes” (p. 235) etched indelibly on his own back.

The liminality in which Parker makes his decision is a landscape of disorientation and confusion. It is also the psychological environment in which he is finally able to make a choice of the design that he will bear. He hopes that the design will create a better relationship with his “saved” Christian wife (O’Conner, 1993, p.

238). His choice is paradoxically, an image of Self, one that he is unable to see except with the aid of a mirror. The unconscious hope of coniunctio, of wholeness within himself as well as in the marriage, is symbolized in the image of Parker's Self being placed where his wife would see it. What is important for this discussion is the shift of consciousness that occurs in Parker's liminal state.

The image of Self, as a picture of Christ in a tattoo book, is encountered in a state when the hero's ego is no longer stable. Parker is disoriented and in a temporary state of psychosis. In this example, the question arises of whether the liminal state occurs before an encounter or follows because of an encounter. Does the archetype intrude autonomously over the threshold? From the following example of a liminal encounter in psychosis, it appears that a chicken-and-egg dilemma exists. We are told, "No direct answer can be given to the questions of whether the archetype comes and whether or not it is acquired" (Jacobi, 1959, p. 31).

The modern depth psychologist James Hillman believes that the pagan gods of the ancients are as real as they were in bygone times, but that the gods are no longer recognized or honored. They exist today as our symptoms of psychopathology. "Gods, as in Greek tragedy, force themselves symptomatically into awareness. Our pathologizing is their work, a divine process working in the human soul" (1975, p. 104). The following case may illustrate how this might look.

An Encounter in Psychosis

The opportunity to work with a patient with an experience of a liminal type of encounter came, synchronistically, just as this writing was drawing to a close. It was during the winter solstice that the patient appeared, in the darkest depths of the year when Sir Gawain met the Green Knight and the sun is reborn, and the Khidr myth has

been identified with the myth of the sun-god and rebirth (Jung, 1939/1944). The patient recounted his “signs” and strange encounter during the parallel depths of the writing of the dissertation. The heuristic nature of this research insists that this topic, the knowing of Khidr, is alive and fully constellated in the work and in the world.

Ted is an unmarried, 26 year-old man, in treatment for chronic schizophrenia. He is an engaging fellow with good insight and above-average intelligence, who works nights. Ted’s first psychotic break occurred when he was 21 years old. His current medication, Olanzapine (Zypraxa) has been helpful in diminishing his symptoms of auditory and somatic hallucinations. Computer technology has provided him with another respite; a space where the voices do not intrude. He has learned to be guarded in talking about his voices and his thoughts. Social withdrawal is a characteristic of schizophrenia, so that loneliness is a primary issue in his therapy.

In our fourth session, Ted told me of certain signs he had been given. “I was walking along the road by the river when a car pulled up in front of me. A man got out, peed over the side of the road, and waited for me to pass close to him. Then he walked up and looked at me and said, ‘You will never be lonely.’” My patient told me that this event, which had occurred several years earlier, impressed him as an important event that has great personal significance but also causes confusing and strange thoughts. The event lingered in his conscious thoughts, “a constant conjunction” (Rhode, 1994, p. 33).

It was important for this young man to be able to talk about this sign and his voices, in order to try to gain insight into his thought processes and reality as well as to bridge the gap of emptiness between others and himself. It is not difficult to see the parallel between Ted’s sign and a Khidr encounter. He was, like Moses, on the road, journeying by flowing river waters and a sudden, unexpected and strange

encounter occurs. The stranger who appears unexpectedly, behaves bizarrely, and speaks with cryptic import, is found in the myth material. The unusual, even shocking actions of the stranger, first peeing, then speaking an unusual phrase to Ted, resemble the behavior of Khidr.

Was Ted searching for the water of life? In fact, he was walking to a bar, the modern place of the hero's encounter with the mentor, and the place where special waters known as "spirits" are found. The encounter caused him to re-think his intention of going to the bar. Ted stated that he did not think he should put too much importance on this experience, and that he didn't think he should talk about signs, but that he still remembered the feeling of the moment. His affect was intense and he was fully engaged as he communicated this story to me.

The encounter experience that Ted related to me could have happened to anyone, but for this individual it took on numinosity and held import for meaning in his life.

Hillman's (1975) vision of depth psychology may be recalled here in that Ted's psychopathology represents a complex that contains an archetype. There is a god, a god of meaning breaking through into awareness in Ted's pain (pp. 104-105). The event that seemed to be a sign to Ted may be actually be viewed as *pathos*, that is, pathos in the original Greek meaning of "something that happens," or "experiences" (1975, p. 97).

The significance lies in the moment of encounter with the "other." The stranger spoke words that Ted's inner voices might use to address his painful loneliness.

What occurs with schizophrenics in their withdrawal from the world is "an autochthonous or asocial expansion of the self (what some authors call a hypertrophy

of the ego) that is due to the attributing of the self of attitudes and roles that are originated by the self itself. These attitudes are permitted to expand after the unpleasant attitude, originally introjected from others, are rejected and projected” (Arieti, 1994, p. 348).

The progressive “desocialization” of this schizophrenic young man is intruded upon by an experience that directly addressed his painful isolation (Arieti, 1994, p. 348). The Khidr encounter is a compensatory experience. It addresses the psychic imbalance that appears in Moses’ one-sidedness and ego inflation. In Ted’s experience, there is attempt of the self to “rebuild” itself and find meaning in a personal reality that has confused and altered its symbolic significance (p. 349). Arieti states that “the process of desocialization may be arrested, slowed down, or made more bearable by these restitution phenomena” (1994, p. 349).

The appearance of a sign, one that can be identified here with our mythologem of Khidr, indicates that Ted is experiencing schizophrenic symptoms expressed as “paleosymbols” (Arieti, 1994, p. 349). A “paleosymbol” is a remnant of the social level that we can understand in a schizophrenic who has lost the meaning of common symbols. The attempt of my patient to share an experience of great affect for him with me took the form of a “paleosymbol”(Arieti, 1994, p. 349) of a Khidr figure. The “telling of events,” which is what this study of the Khidr myth is re-creating, “is what *mythos* originally meant” (Hillman, 1975, p. 143).

For Ted to share the secret of one of his signs, in full awareness of the ridicule and suspicion he meets when he tells of his voices, is important to note. It suggests that transference has developed in the therapeutic relationship. The pre-transference state of the patient as described by Edinger (1957) is akin to what Jung (1939/1944), identified as the “one-sidedness” of the conscious attitude of

Moses in the Khidr myth (p. 19). This state is described among primitives as “loss of soul,” a condition which resembles neurotic phenomena experienced as loss of energy or libido. (Edinger, p. 19). It is “usually a sterile, bankrupt, or paralyzed state of mind” (p. 19) that leaves the patient, in some measure, isolated from people and significant life experiences. The transference changes this.

In the transference, the patient finds himself deeply involved with at least one other human being. Something completely new has entered his consciousness and grips him. He is involved in life again. In other words, he has contacted his libido. If these experiences are lived through responsibly and consciously integrated, says Edinger, they then produce a permanent personality change. He continues to say that this is not an easy task and it almost always involves “painful conflict” (Edinger, 1957, p. 35). This work is “equivalent to the alchemical opus,” and requires great perseverance, honesty, and devotion (p. 35), the very qualities Moses must have to continue the journey with Khidr.

The objective psyche can find meaning, just as in therapy with “early selfobject failures have produced a mistrust of ones own subjectivity”(Corbett, 1996, p. 169). When poor object-relations result in an ego structure that is not strong enough to validate personal experiences, then the therapist may act in that role of affirmation of experience.

Ted’s opening up in therapy also suggests that he is still capable of interpersonal relations. Ted retains some ego strength and intact sense of self. He has not at this point identified with the unconscious contents. The man whom Ted encountered is seen as separate, an “Other,” and there is not a “confusion of personal identity with the source of the experience” (Corbett, 1996, p. 21). In Ted’s struggle to maintain grounded, to avoid sounding as if he were “placing unjustified meaning”

onto the event (p. 102), he said it was “just another person, it didn’t mean anything,” he said defensively, sounding irritated. Irritation or even anger would be an appropriate response to the felt sense of loss of the affect the event stirs and the meaning it holds may be what has been called the “erotics of encounter” (Gallop, cited in Romanyshyn, 1991, p. 20). The loss of the numinousity of the experience is a loss of Eros, or libido.

I believe that in the work with this young man, the value of therapy lies in the validation of loneliness and sharing the journey on a strange road of reality. Most importantly, as Arieti states, “the fear of interpersonal relations for a schizophrenic is greater than loneliness. “It is one of the major tasks of psychotherapy to make such fear less powerful than the desire to establish ties with fellow human beings” (p. 350).

The archetypal nature of the Khidr story, appearing as it does through time and in many cultures speaks to its value as a common human experience. In the case of Ted the pathology of schizophrenia is experienced in his symptoms of voices, the stigma of mental illness, and suffering what he calls a “black place of pain” inside, loneliness and the struggle to find meaning in life. The signs and voices of a thought disorder emerge from a liminal state where the conscious is overwhelmed by primary process. Jung states that Khidr, understood as the stone, and as a symbol of the self, at first frightens Moses with his deed.

For my patient, Ted, his impression of a strange encounter is consistent with his symptoms of schizophrenia, undifferentiated type. It is a sign from his voices that gives special meaning to his life. For understanding the unconscious as it breaks through into the cognitive domain, we may say that Ted’s experience is a compensatory unconscious content in the form of an archetype, here a Khidr-like messenger of a cryptic idea.

For someone with good ego strength the experience could appear strange, even psychotic. It nonetheless represents a guiding force towards individuation, just as real and valid for Ted as for Moses encountering Khidr. Even in psychosis, events such as these can prove helpful, for they are “soothing and provide order in the midst of chaos” (Corbett, 1996, p. 170). The numinousum has “restructuring power” and “can be integrative even in psychotic people” (p. 170). There is the caveat, however that “paradoxically when the self structures are not firm enough to cope with the experience of the numinousum, it can precipitate a psychosis” (p. 170).

Jung gives us further information on the nature of how an event representing the unconscious contents might disturb the psyche.

Psychologically, this means that at the first meeting with the self all those negative qualities can appear which almost invariably characterize an unexpected encounter with the unconscious. The danger is that of an inundation by the unconscious, which in a bad case may take the form of a psychosis if the conscious mind is unable to assimilate, either intellectually or morally, the invasion of unconscious elements. (Jung, 1950/1980b, p. 322)

Proximity to primary process with the danger of slipping into psychosis is an underlying issue to the study of any archetype, and Khidr is no exception. The realm of the archetypes maybe envisioned as Faust’s “realm of the Mothers,” the divine chaos of the unconscious, and the place of shamanic soul travel. In the liminal zone of archetypal encounter, being enveloped by unconscious contents breaking through into the cognitive domain represents a real threat to the cognitive mental state. The risk is one that some have chosen to take. Jung (1961/1973) is one of these. He tells us:

Only when all props and crutches are broken and no cover from the rear offers even the slightest hope of security, does it become possible to experience an archetype that up to then had lain hidden behind the meaningful nonsense

played out by the anima...in all chaos there is cosmos; in all disorder a secret order; in all caprice, a fixed law. (p. 178)

Jung (1961/1973) knew that he had to let himself plummet down to the fantasies that were stirring in him, 'underground.' "I was committing myself to a dangerous enterprise not for myself alone, but also for my patients" (p. 179). Entering the unconscious is the shaman's way to enter into the world of the dead and demons in order to bring back lost souls and heal the living.

In working with a patient such as Ted, caution must be observed in working with material from the unconscious, because of the fragmentation of the self that exists. However, the telling and holding of the event can be a healing experience if the therapist is conscious of its numinous and mythological significance.

For the depth psychotherapist who attends to material from the unconscious, it is an advantage to have an understanding of mythological meaning and a personal sense of the experience of archetypal encounter with an alteration of consciousness. The process of telling of events is important on a depth psychology level, also. Telling the story is a way of seeing the myth that is taking place in them. The more clearly the myth is seen in the events that are "psychologized," "the more mysterious and enigmatic they become, even as they become more and more revealed" (Hillman, 1975, p. 142-143). The experience is found in nonpsychotic individuals in small breaks, moments of crisis, illness, and lowered defense mechanisms. In breakdown there can also occur a building up. "There is no guarantee-not for a single moment-that we will not fall into error or stumble into deadly peril," says Jung (1961/1973, p. 127). Moses, as conscious ego, chooses to take the journey with Khidr, to stay patiently in unknowing and trusting acceptance of whatever comes. "But when one follows the path of individuation, when one lives one's own life, one

must take mistakes into the bargain; life would not be complete without them” (p. 127).

Delayed Recognition

There is a meaning beyond rational knowing that will emerge in its own time. The state of unknowing and liminal consciousness has a function. I believe that the Self does nothing without purpose and underlying order, even though, as proposed in chaos theory, it may appear to be random and chaotic. The recurrent phenomenon of the delay in recognition of the meaning of events and just who the now-departed stranger really is speaks of an unconscious process at work.

The story of Khidr and Moses in Sura 18 tells us that Moses overlooks the place he seeks, the first time he passed by. Overlooking the place one so desperately seeks and going right by it is a characteristic of the Khidr encounter. “Failure to recognize a moment of crucial importance” is a motif that is encountered in a great variety of mythical forms” (Jung, 1950/1980a, p. 139). Moses realizes he has unconsciously found the source of life and then lost it again, which we might well regard as “a remarkable intuition” (p. 139).

The moment may not be recognized for what it is until the moment has passed, sometimes not until the telling of the story or the dream later to a companion or one’s therapist. It often produces the amazed, delayed realization of just who that masked man was. The encounter may occur in dreams, in an altered state of consciousness, in the therapy room, as a client’s spontaneous “aha” moment, or in the therapist’s successful reframe of events. It may occur during intense life passages, or in moments of crisis, fatigue, or disorientation.

The shift often occurs after the encounter when the realization dawns that this in fact was a numinous presence, a darshan, or meeting with a divine entity. Tales of the appearance of Elijah the Prophet have the sequence of a lowered threshold in depression, sleep, an encounter with an Other, then recognition of the identity of the stranger. The tale cited in Chapter 3, of Elijah's begging visit to Rabbi Akiba's door and the Rabbi's total change in attitude when he realized who had been knocking, is another tale of this nature. It appears that the realization that it was in fact--mirabile dictu--Khidr who graced one with his presence is the classic opening for a the shift in ego consciousness. The shift can occur in the moment of encounter or afterwards. The realization, the splitting open of consciousness to another reality and a greater wisdom is total, including consciousness, body and environment.

The Other

The phenomenon of delayed recognition emanates from the unknowing experience itself and is consistent with any encounter with the numinous. "Spirit implies transcendence of the human, something which comes to us from beyond ego consciousness, which is felt as other than myself. It imposes levels of forms of order that may or may not be discernible by human consciousness except retrospectively, as we look at our history" (Corbett, 1996, p. 113)

The archetype is numinous by nature, and mortals have never been able to stay with the numinous for long. The reports of spiritual directors who listen to and interpret experiences of the holy attest to this shying away from conscious recognition. It is comparable to seeing the beloved, one's fantasy partner at a party and speaking to everyone else present, except the desired object. Why is such behavior so familiar? It is difficult to bear the proximity of the archetype, the

projection of the Self. The liminal state and the unknowing that overtakes the consciousness serves minimally as a protective veil, a barrier of respect for the holy.

The biblical Moses hid in a cleft in the rock on Mt. Sinai before seeing the Almighty, and even then, he was not permitted a face-to-face encounter. "The Other's alterity is given with the trace of God as he passes by," writes the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (quoted in de Boer, 1997, p. 12). The experience would be powerful, perhaps leading to death or perhaps even psychosis. Martin Buber's "I-Thou" concept proposed that "Ich werde am Du," "I become through Thou." De Boer shows that Levinas deepens Buber's thought on inter-subjectivity, and his classic, transformative encounter with the young man in Meetings (1973). Levinas does not believe that "I become through thou," but that the self is awakened to its own being in the encounter. For Levinas the other becomes the Other, a transcendent, "unexpected...disturbing presence....His presence prompts me to look at things from more angles, that is, to speak of them objectively" (quoted in de Boer, 1997, pp. 18-20).

Fellini experienced a disturbed affect in the presence of the Other, in his dream of the foreigner at the airport.

All he had to do was arrive and now he's here. The suspicion that the situation is so inevitable increases my discomfort, my state of malaise. I'm more and more embarrassed until I become silent, seized by a confused, suspended feeling of shame. A great silence falls on everything. I feel as if so much time had gone by...the unreachable, impenetrable, dusty and gleaming Oriental is still there in front of me (Fellini, quoted in Stein, 1983, p. 49).

The archetypal encounter is jolting, disturbing. "I cannot absorb the alterity of the Other into my own identity; it is an absolute alterity, questioning and unseating my freedom," (de Boer, p. 12). The Other, as understood in Levinas, is archetypal, an unknowable absolute, an over-reaching all-Being not unlike the Jungian Self.

Corbett (1996) explains that “any archetype reveals the workings of one particular manifestation of spirit; the term Self implies the totality of all of the manifestations of spirit” (p. 113).

The “shamanistic territory” described by Eliade (1964/1989) as seems to constellate or facilitate an encounter with an “Other.” Encounters with images of unconscious contents, which are forms of archetypal figures, are part of the shaman’s healing journey into the liminal world where lost souls and objects go. Hillman (1983) describes the function of images, saying they have autonomy and reality as archetypal experience. This is consistent with what we know of an encounter with Self as an Other, as Khidr. “When an image is realized--fully imagined as a living being other than myself -then it becomes a psychopomp--a guide with a soul having its own inherent limitation and necessity” (p. 62).

Unknowning in the Field of Encounter

There is a “not-knowing” quality to the space of archetypal encounter. Like the knights of the Grail legend “who ride into the deepest and darkest parts of the forest, avoiding the quotidian paths, the entry into the place where the archetype of transformation is met is uncharted” (Haule, 1990, p. 219). The tale of Khidr teaches that finding reasons, wisdom, or Eternal Life is not the real issue; waiting in unknowing serves a purpose in itself. It is not the goal of individuation that is important, it is the journey itself, so to speak. There is a meaning beyond rational knowing that will emerge in its own time. The knights do not know where they are going or how to get there. On meeting a woman in this forest, Lancelot replies: “In truth, young lady, I do not rightly know, save there where fortune takes me. For I have no notion of the whereabouts of what I seek” (Haule, 1990, p. 291).

The archetypal experience of a mythological figure that I am attempting to describe fits Perry's understanding of the psychological process of individuation. Symbols seen in dreams or fantasy are of "mythological aura" (Perry, 1987, p. 136). They "portray the centralizing process or the production [that is, the making conscious] of a new center of the personality...the 'self'" (Jung, quoted in Perry, p. 136). This center, the self, is

a component of the psyche which, however much it finds its way into some esoteric collective cultural expression from the unconscious, makes its appearance in individuals only at unusual times when constellated by a situation of conflict, stress, puzzlement, or profound stirring, particularly in such turmoils as religious experiences or psychotic episodes. (Perry, 1987, p. 136)

Moses' difficulty in bearing the anxiety and ambiguity of his encounter with Khidr is in keeping with the "not-knowing" approach, and need to hold on in the analysis bearing the intolerable tension Schwartz-Salant (1989) describes in his work on borderline personalities. "The image of the self is so little known to Western man that he has to approach an understanding of it with all possible readiness to admit his limitations of knowledge" (Perry, 1987, p. 316).

Paradox and anxiety are characteristic of unknowing and of the Khidr experience. The state of anxiety arises from the unknowing and ambiguity when the conscious encounters a reality that is unfamiliar. This unknowing place is where the shift may occur. Winnicott repeatedly speaks about the importance of the analyst growing the capacity to wait and to bear the tension of paradoxical truths shifting from stage to stage. Eigen in "Winnicott's area of freedom" (1991) develops the Winnicottian theory of transitional space. His discussion of the importance of the analyst bearing with paradox until transformation occurs evokes images of the relationship of Moses and Khidr.

Paradox

“The analyst must bear and enjoy the tension of paradoxical living, as paradoxical truths shift from stage to stage.”

(Field, 1996, p. 83)

In the shifting landscape of Hermes, reality is fraught with confusion and ambiguity, infringed upon and enriched momentarily by paradox. Paradox is the essence of the Khidr encounter. What does this paradox mean? James Hillman (1975) believes that paradox is a sign of the intervention of the gods, the felt experience of a constellated archetype that puts one’s consciousness into contact with madness and the divine. In this understanding the psychological pathology of confusion, disorientation, and darkness that Moses endures with Khidr is in fact the messages and presence of the gods forcing themselves into his awareness. The paradox is the intervention of the divine, the experience of a disturbing constellated archetype. The encounter puts one’s consciousness into contact with madness and the divine. Hillman (1975) re-visions psychological pathology as the messages and presence of the gods, as they force themselves into our awareness.

At the border of the unconscious, suddenly one’s reality is infringed upon and enriched by paradox. The paradox is the intervention of the divine, the experience of a constellated archetype which puts one’s consciousness into contact with madness and the divine, in the psychological pathology that Hillman (1975) recognized as the messages and presence of the gods forcing themselves into our awareness. When too much clarity is required, the spirit of Hermes draws back and chooses ambiguity, not out of a stubborn preference for obscurity and paradox, but because by repudiating ambiguity one is left with only one level of meaning and only one style of communication,” (Paris, 1990, p. 67).

In "Holding the Opposites" (1977), Tuby works with the Mercurius archetype to explore the role of the arcane substance in the opus alchemicum as a metaphor for the transference. The paradoxical nature of the metaphor, the appearance of the Hermaphroditic Rebis at once the fruit and starting point of the opus is difficult to understand because "alchemy is a protest against dualism," says Tuby (p. 13).

Liminal and threshold figures appear as phenomena of ritual and sacred space. To go to where the guardian of the unconscious bears means bearing with paradox. Jacobi develops Jung's concept of archetypes, stating that we may only know an archetype by its effects. To know a paradox must therefore require a particular, different kind of knowing. At the border of the unconscious, one may be alone, with another, asleep or awake, when suddenly one's reality is infringed upon and enriched by paradox.

A moment held in paradox creates the kind of confusion and sense of liminality that makes decisions and choices more poignant than in a normal state. The moment is "a gathering of attention in the moment, an active concentration of awareness-the poise before movement." This event in time is what Appelbaum (1995) refers to as "the stop" (Appelbaum, 1995, p. xi). No theoretical construct, the stop is an actual moment, the moment of poise. The stop lives in the interstices of action, and ordinary recluses.

It shuns the spotlight yet exerts a definite and important control over what takes place. Furthermore, it gives us a key to a deeper engagement in a meaning that unfolds our lives. For it offers a choice; either to remain habit-bound or to regain a freedom in one's approach to an endeavor. The stop is the advent of an intelligence of choice (p. xi).

The above lines describe a point which resembles what Cox & Theilgaard call the “point of urgency,” a moment of incipient dynamic instability, in which endopsychic patterning is such that the patient is receptive to a therapist’s initiative to bring mutative metaphor into the therapeutic process. The use of metaphor is described by Cox & Theilgaard (1987, p. 99) as “exerting its mutative effect by energizing alternative perspectival aspects of experience. And this inevitably has a startling effect on the patient.” The kairos is what Heidegger described as “a threshold occasion, a moment of ecstasis when something moves away from its standing as one thing to become another” (p. 22).

The place calls for letting go of old knowing. This is the nature of the crossroads; the three highways coming together that Sophocles described where Oedipus arrived. “O three roads, dark ravine, woodland and way, Where three roads meet” (Appelbaum, 1995, p. 131). There is a choice to be made. The crossroads is a place of danger, and of possibility. There exists the possibility of an encounter and a change in consciousness.

Sacks (1990, p. xix) speaks of letting go of old ways of knowing.

Force of habit, resistance to change--so great in all realms of thought--reaches its maximum in medicine, in the study of our most complex suffering and disorders of being; for we are here compelled to scrutinize the deepest, darkest, and most fearful parts of ourselves, the parts we strive to deny or not-see. The thoughts which are most difficult to grasp or express are those which touch on this forbidden region and re-awaken in us our strongest denials and our most profound intuitions.

A shift in consciousness is often unexpected. A radical newness, a calling into existence that which was not there before is called Poesis, a term with its primary source in Plato’s Symposium, developed as a construct of psychodynamics by Cox & Theilgaard, (1987). The paradoxical use of metaphor is suggested in psychotherapy

to access a “listening landscape” where personality changes can occur at “active liminal turning points” (p. 122). A radical newness, a calling into existence that which was not there before is called Poesis, a term Heidegger refers to as a “bringing forth” with its primary source in Plato’s Symposium. Heidegger uses this term in its widest sense of the transformative experience of the crossroads.

Alden Josey (1995) concentrates on the Jungian understanding of how the unconscious responds to one-sidedness that develops through overvaluation of the conscious standpoint. Attention is given to the two kinds of thinking proposed by Jung (1912/1976) in his epoch-making work, Symbols of Transformation. Josey points to the distinction made between directed thinking and fantasy thinking allows the “possibility of prizing one kind of thinking over another to such an extent that our lives become trapped in a limiting psychic one-sidedness” (p. 3). Being able to let go of such an unbalanced psychic position seems to require a special time and place, liminal space or container, and some sort of encounter or confrontation with self. It is “a movement out of the suspension between opposites, a living birth that leads to anew level of being, a new situation” (Jung, 1916/1981, p. 90).

Let us return to the trysting place of the rock, where the waters meet, the fish is restored to life, and Moses encounters Khidr, ego meets the Self. In a place of junction between the ordinary and the sacred world, two unlikely travelers enter into a solemn contract. In psychotherapy, the soul care of sitting and biding time with a patient, waiting in unknowing, is integral to the process. As in a dream or in imaginal space, time is suspended as one waits within the suffering to see what emerges. It is within this relational space of pain and tolerance of anxiety and ambiguity that a shift in consciousness may occur.

Summary

The place of transformation lies between of shifting boundaries of awareness in the reality of the psyche. It also occurs as a concrete fact, for it leaves memories and real effects on the consciousness and behavior of those who experience it. The landscape of the encounter is psychologically experienced as a liminal state, a realm betwixt and between. Laws other than those of the conscious ego govern this place without time and space. It is a temenos. It appears to accompany a meeting with Khidr or a transformative moment with an "Other," but the sense of liminality does not necessarily precede or facilitate the encounter.

The characteristics of Khidr are discerned through studying accounts of liminal encounter. Elements of the liminal experience include crisis, illness, death, shock, confronting mortality, travel, night, darkness, sea, transition, midlife, and other life passages, or psychotic thought processes. It is part of the experience to be left with a gift. The gift may be tangible, an object such as an orange, or intangible as a new perspective, a new direction in life. Other characteristics are unexpectedness, surprise, and a change or re-structuring of the personality structure. The archetypal nature of the encounter means that the numinous is being approached. This proximity to the Self is potentially dangerous if the psyche does not have good ego strength. It is important to avoid being identified with the archetype and lost in psychosis. A delayed recognition of what has happened and who was encountered is common.

Experience of a Khidr encounter needs interpretation for consciousness and integration. They are what Hume calls "constant conjunctions," events that haunt you, "moments of unknowable conceptions, inviting exploration of their resonance" (Rhode, 1994, p. 33). The psychotherapist does well to be self-aware and able to bring consciousness into the therapeutic relationship when working with this material.

Chapter 9

Khidr in the Here and Now

The ego idea for example would be to say: "There is a good thing on top of that mountain. I will make a straight line for it." But the archetypal way is not like that; it is a serpentine way that wriggles and spirals its way to the top. We often feel defeated by it and brought to a standstill. It makes most people terribly impatient and even desperate when nothing happens and they get nowhere. They feel hindered all the time; they don't understand that this is just as it should be that it is actually their only chance of getting to the top. (Jung, 1976, p. 296)

Working out of the Transference

The above quotation captures the essence of the experience of my transference in the working relationship with the dissertation topic, Khidr. It has been said, "Khidr is the here beyond the there, and the there, beyond the here" (Mason, personal communication, 1998). The process of coming to know this figure and describe his activity in psychological terms has proved to be a labyrinth of mirrors and secret gardens. The experience of coming to an understanding of an archetypal figure is familiar to anyone who has ever broken an oral thermometer. It is like grasping quicksilver, referring to both the element known to alchemists, and to the mercurial, archetypal figure that leads the intrepid seeker down a serpentine path.

I have found myself encountering Khidr's name and figures who carry certain of his qualities, in dreams, conversations, and unexpected places, and in turning the corner of seemingly ordinary moments of daily life. Frustration, excitement, confusion, and fascination characterize the process of working this topic and let it work the writer. The startling, synchronistic events occurring during this project seem to indicate that the archetype is constellated, or in other words, that Khidr is present.

The research concept of “working out of the transference” has guided the writing of this dissertation (Romanyshyn, 1997). The Khidr myth itself is about a research question, that is, finding meaning and new ways of knowing in a life-research journey and allowing the topic, the archetypal guiding image, to reveal itself on its own terms. The work demands surrender of the rational mind to the process and to uncomfortable moments of unknowing, seemingly endless waiting, detours, and ambiguity.

Just as qualitative research works out of the transference with an unspoken taboo on a relationship with the topic, the model of the hermeneutic circle, used here, is a relationship between the reader and the topic. Because the circle is one-dimensional and lacks complexity, depth must come from the researcher’s willingness to go deeper. This depth comes through the passion of the researcher, the process of commitment to the soul on its own terms, listening with the ears of the heart for what calls, for who is there between the lines. Scholars of Torah say that the words of God are the black Hebrew letters of the text written on the white background, a pure white revealing God’s holy being for those who see between the letters.

Knowing through study of text and relationship with the topic has an intuitive level. This approach acknowledges the transference, that is, the relationship that always occurs, whether consciously or unawares. It occurs between the researcher and the topic, just as the transference occurs between psychotherapist and patient, between lover and beloved, and perhaps, quite possibly, in every connecting, conscious moment between humans and the objects that empassion them, be they stars, rocks, trees, animals, books, or archetypal forms.

If there were to be a call for nominations to the position of official archetype of a research model, a guide for working out of the transference, this dissertation may be considered as a motion to elect Khidr. To work with a topic in constant awareness of one's investment and relation to the work, a certain amount of personification of the topic occurs, relationships happen. In the case of working with an archetypal figure such as Khidr this becomes exceptionally clear. As an example, Keryeni (1944/1992) gives testimony of having an intense, personal relationship with the topic of his book on Hermes. This approach is still outside the Western scientific research model. The concept of archetypal psychology itself is a shift in the direction of the East. Campbell (1973) calls our attention to the Arabian and Persian roots of the concept of the archetype.

The topic of Khidr has guided this work in directions not foreseen, such as to the exploration of time and space, the liminal quality of the psychological Khidr, the meaning of the three deeds, and the theme of the hero's journey. In the inception of this work, the Khidr story seemed mysterious and determined to remain that way. The response to descriptions of this dissertation topic befuddles and glazes over the eyes of most listeners. Transference experience with this topic suggests that the archetypal form of Khidr functions, in proximity, to disturb conscious rationality and create a state of unknowing providing space for something new to be envisioned.

The following series of events is an example of the presence of Khidr in this research. This dissertation has its inception in a concept of a hermeneutic of the Wise Old Man figure as he appears in Jewish legend, the Prophet Elijah. The realm of the imaginal soul-guide holds archetypal and personal appeal through encounters in visions, dreams and the day world. Patrick Mahaffey listened to the idea, then suggested a look at Henri Corbin's Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi,

before the initial work was begun. My thought was, “Look at Islam when the proposed topic was clearly Judaic?” The idea stirred resistance. In fact, the suggestion irritated and disappointed me. There had been a period of study in Islamic literature and religion over 20 years earlier in my life. This time and this paper seemed an ideal vehicle to move in deeper with Judaic studies and Kabbalah.

With some petulance, I made a trip to the bookstore and found a copy of Corbin’s work with surprising ease. I was overcome with a feeling of profound familiarity. The book fell open at random. There lay a magnificent Mogul illustration of the Prophet Elijah seated in a pastoral setting by a natural spring. He was engaged in what appeared to be an animated and enjoyable discussion with a robed man identified as Khidr. I had begun a paper on Khidr in that earlier period of study, and left it, regretfully, unfinished. The allure of Khidr persisted, however, until I found myself in Turkey, at Ephesus, in the Cave of the Seven Sleepers. The research, and the researcher, had gone to the concrete world and away from the imaginal place of ideas.

Now, in the dissertation process, confronted with the Khidr-Elijah image, the coincidence brought a sense of bafflement and wonder. In this state the Khidr presence became real. Khidr as a content of the unconscious broke through to startle and break “the window of ego consciousness” (Romanyshyn, 1994, p. 6). The time had come to pick up the journey with Khidr again. A compensatory shift in my perception had taken place, bringing a new perspective in this encounter with an image that caused me to relinquish ego’s logical, intellectual attitude. The image was a form of archetypal encounter. Archetypes cannot be seen directly; they must be observed by their indirect reflections in the culture or in individual lives (Jacobi, 1959).

As the work progressed, there appeared to be more levels to the myth than suspected. For example, the idea that Jung proposes of Khidr as the Self who appears in times of ego one-sidedness opens the question to the numinous nature of the archetype.

In dealing with archetypes and images of the Self, the work becomes the problem of trying to define the Holy, the Atman, or the Godhead. The problem then becomes one of differentiation of the Khidr figure from other archetypes and from God. The feeling of being overwhelmed is not unexpected working with such a topic. Clarity shifts from dark confusion to deep intimacy. Synchronistic events re-affirm the presence of a guiding archetypal presence. The transference with the work leaves the sense that there will always, eternally be more to know, that wants to be known, has kept the work going at a steady intensity.

I have found the writing unexpectedly difficult, although its ideas and intentions are simple and straightforward. But one cannot go straightforward unless the way is clear, and the way is allowed. One struggles to gain the right perspective, focus, and tone - and then one loses it, all unawares. One must continually fight to regain it, to hold accurate awareness. (Sacks, 1990, pp. xviii-xix)

The neurologist Oliver Sacks (1990) describes in the above words how he experienced the writing of his book, Awakenings. This struggle to maintain focus and perspective parallels my experience of working with the Khidr myth. A synchronistic event occurred when I was not looking for Khidr, but found him when the only page in Flying Saucers (Jung, 1958/1978) with Khidr's name on it lay open in my hands. This random event occurred when I was looking for some background for working with a client who suffered nightmares of being abducted by aliens. Coincidentally, at that time I was reading Corbett's (1996) recently published book, and happened to read of a UFO dream as "numinous" and "a bridge to the

transpersonal realm” (pp. 6-7). The Khidr myth, as an archetypal theme, is by definition about an encounter with the numinous.

Since any archetype is numinous, that is, “possesses a specific energy, it will attract to itself the contents of consciousness-conscious ideas that render it perceptible and hence capable of conscious realization” (Stevens, 1993, p. 14). The definition of an archetype is the prototype of a universal pattern, and a connecting energy between the unconscious world of forms and form as matter. This concept is in keeping with Jung’s hypothesis that the archetype in fact “transcended the nature-versus-nurture debate and healed the Cartesian split between body and mind” (p. 13). He proposed not only that the archetypal structures were “continuous with structures controlling the behaviour of inorganic matter as well. The archetype was not mere psychic entity but ‘the bridge to matter in general’” (Jung, quoted in Stevens, p. 13). This is not surprising, given the experience of intense affect and synchronistic events surrounding the constellation of any archetype and the preparation of this work.

Rosemary Gordon (1985) also suggests a bridge-making approach to understanding psychological space. Rather than assuming the view that the archetypal is elemental and archaic or that it is a supra-personal and prophetic internal guide, Gordon proposes a third way of understanding the quality and the function of the archetypal.

While psychological growth and maturity consists in the withdrawal of archetypal themes, images and motifs from actual objects and persons—including one’s self—to which they have become attached as a result of the processes of projection, incorporation, and identification, yet they must not be totally superceded and eliminated. (p. 118)

Archetypal themes have “a very important function” which, according to Gordon,

they can only fulfil if, instead of distorting actual objects and persons, they can move into what Winnicott has called the “area of experience” or the “area of illusion.” From there they can then enrich the inner world, enliven it, activate imagination, restore a sense of the wondrous, the awesome, the miraculous, the mysterious, the poetic, and so enhance the sense of being truly and meaningfully alive. (Gordon, pp. 118-119)

My approach to the topic of Khidr inadvertently has taken the form of Jung’s method of “talking around” the archetype, not defining it (Jacobi, 1959, p. 31). Jung provides us with an excellent example of this kind of research with his associative weavings around the nature of the archetypes. The “necessity of depicting landscapes (thoughtscapes)” by images and “remarks” is described in the Philosophical Investigations of Wittgenstein. He states that this sort of investigation of inner landscape “compels us to travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction” (quoted in Sacks, 1990, p. xviii). The same or almost the same points are “always being approached from different directions and new sketches made” (p. xviii).

The Khidr story tells of encounter with the “Other” as a living symbol. A still-living, genuine symbol can never be resolved (that is, analyzed) by a rational interpretation, points out Von Franz (1980), but can only be circumscribed and amplified by conscious associations (p. 83). The process of exploration of archetypal phenomena opens the door to a world requiring a “not a static and systematic formulation, but an active exploration of images and views, a continual jumping about and imaginative movement” (Sacks, 1990, p. xviii).

New understanding comes uncomfortably; new ways of knowing are born in breech birth. The act of reading Jung gives an opportunity to taste the liminal state.

His method of writing is difficult to read, as he produces amplifications and associations that extend into seemingly unrelated areas. The material he introduced is sometimes arcane, obscure, and often esoteric, but Khidr-like; he provides an access route to a place of nonlinear, intuitive thinking. In this manner, Jung shares his associations linking him to the archetype that serves as his guide. His thought process is circular and confusing, creating a simulation of the journey itself. The attentive reader who allows the process to relax the rational defenses may then find himself lured into the threshold realm along with Jung and whatever archetypal forms are present. In this psychological state one may encounter the Khidr figure and his counterparts.

Often I meet, on walking from a door,
A flash of objects never seen before.

As known particulars come wheeling by,
They dart across a corner of the eye.

They flicker faster than a blue-tailed swift,
Or when dark follows dark in lightning rift.

They slip between the fingers of my sight.
I cannot put my glance upon them tight.

Sometimes the blood is privileged to guess
The things the eye or hand cannot possess.

(Roethke, 1966, p. 8)

Khidr as the Immortal Self

Towards the end of this writing, a comment was made about Khidr that upped the amperage on the transference with the topic. This writer's 25 years of interest and current years of research on Khidr were mentioned to a knowledgeable Jungian as

an example of a long-term relationship. The response posed the challenge, what kind of a long-term relationship can be claimed with a stranger who appears mysteriously in the Arabian Desert and then quickly disappears?

The affect this comment stirred was one of sadness, and a sense that this was incorrect, an unjust assumption. It is this writer's experience that the relationship with Khidr is vital and enduring, just as the myth is. If understood as the projection of the Self, as a numinous content of the unconscious, the presence of Khidr exists without cease, if not always constellated and perceived. The experience of encounter with archetypal figures is more than unforgettable. The sense of connection to the Other lingers. Such encounters are what Hume calls constant conjunctions, events that haunt you, "moments of unknowable conceptions, inviting exploration of their resonance" (Rhode, 1994, p. 33)

The saying that when one speaks his name, Khidr is present, is taken seriously in the Middle East. Hillman (1975) states that the gods are present in us in various forms, notably our psychopathologies, and that they want to be acknowledged. It is clear from the writings of Jung on the nature of archetypes and his interpretation of Khidr as the Self, that the images arise from an eternal, formless source, from a deep, yet accessible place recalling Goethe's description of the realm of the mothers:

they are the MOTHERS!
 Through endless solitudes shalt thou be drifted!
 Hast thou through solitudes and deserts dared?
 And hadst thou swum to farthest verge of ocean
 And there the boundless space beheld
 Still hadst thou seem wave after wave in motion,
 Even thou impending doom thy feat compelled.
 Thou hadst seen something in the beryl dim
 At last a blazing tripod tells thee this,
 That there the utterly deepest bottom is
 Its light to thee will then the Mothers show

Some in their seats, the others stand or go,
At their own will: Formation, Transformation,
The Eternal Mind's eternal recreation.

(Goethe, Faust quoted in Jung, 1916/1991, pp. 200-201)

The Self is with us, within us, and the Self is eternal. It is what gives us the intuition of immortality, the hint of the water of Eternal Life. To think of Khidr as a transient in the shifting desert sands acknowledges the liminality of when and where he appears. His guiding presence, however, is not so elusive. He is on-call for us in the same manner as the "imaginal guests" of Mary Watkins (1986), and as the ancestors and ghosts whom Psyche evokes for us whether or not we are conscious of them.

When we invite the gods, they will enter (as suggested by the carvings on the lintel stone of Jung's doorway at Bollingen). Jung's experience in his descent to the unconscious teaches him that his archetypal guides, such as Elijah and Philemon, are waiting for him. Jung muses:

In the encounter with life and the world there are experiences that are capable of moving us to long and thorough reflection. The unfolding of these experiences is regulated, as it were, by two archetypes: the anima, who expresses life, and the "Wise Old Man," who personifies meaning. The long reflection, the "immensa meditatio" of the alchemists is defined as "an internal colloquy with another who is invisible. (Jung, 1955/1976, p. 233)

It is important to remember that the encounter with archetypal figures is a two-way relationship. When Jung returns to another encounter with these figures much later in his life, he remarks that he is surprised that they are not aware of certain changes and events in his life. They explain that they needed him to bring them up to the moment. It is necessary for Jung to do his part in this active, vital relationship. The evidence is that Khidr is as present as he is allowed or invited to be. Khidr will appear sui generis, for Khidr acts as the Self, in relationship with the conscious ego.

The Quest for Immortality

Where is the Khidr myth encountered in the modern, Christianized culture of the West? The quest for immortality expresses itself as the relentless efforts of scientific technology to prolong life and to increase the artificial aids which create the appearance of being everlasting youthful (alive!), cosmetic surgery and Viagra, Rogaine, hair transplants, rejuvenating spas, expensive facial creams, and hormone replacement therapy. The denial of death is a striking feature of sociology in the United States, where the elderly are hidden and medicated into subdued acceptance, and visible dying has only recently become quasi-acceptable through the work of the Hospice movement and the work of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.

Perhaps one of the most uncomfortable aspects of AIDS for the public, when the epidemic hit the gay community with devastation in the 1970s and 1980s, was the spectre of the wasting away and untimely death of the young. The quest is to stay young, not to die. Don't let death win! The quest for youth is obsessive, one-sided, and narcissistic. The quest for youth is actually a misheard call of the hero and the time-honored quest for eternal life, symbolized by the Holy Grail and the Water of Life. The goal is not the external look of youth but the inner, immortal unconscious Self brought to consciousness.

During consciousness altering moments such as occur when the ego meets the Khidr-Self, there is a momentary sense belonging to eternal life. Jung tells us, "The intuition of immortality, which makes itself felt during the transformation, is connected with the peculiar nature of the unconscious. The latter is in a sense non-spatial and non-temporal" (1939/1944, p. 22). Immortality is intuited within and during the actual meeting with the archetypal form of the Self, in this case, Khidr.

It is significant that the quest of Moses for Khidr's water of immortality is an aspect of the Seven Sleepers' story. These seven at Ephesus experienced "a prolongation of life verging on immortality. When they awoke they had slept 309 years. They were transformed during sleep and thereby enjoyed eternal youth. The deification rites of the Mysteries is a projection of the same psychical phenomenon as this "peculiar intuition of expansion" and intuition of immortality (Jung, 1939/1944, p. 22). "He who hears the account of such a mystery recognizes his own self in the questing Moses and in the forgetful Joshua, and the legend shows him how rebirth, leading to immortality, comes about" (p. 21).

We are all the questing Moses. What is transformed, he [Jung] notes, is neither Moses nor Joshua, but the forgotten fish. It begins in a humble place and undergoes the hero's myth. It is the higher personality within us, the Self, which undergoes transformation. Our intuition of immortality refers to the non-spatial and non-temporal aspects of ourselves, and Khidr is that aspect of ourselves, of the unconscious which is revealed as a personality who survives and transforms. (Spiegelman, 1991, p. 14)

"It is the higher personality within us, the Self, which undergoes transformation of the unconscious" (Jung, 1939/1944, p. 22). Khidr's appearance heralds the opportunity for transformation, for a new perspective on life, and compensation for one-sidedness in the form of increased integration and consciousness. This myth of an ego-inflated hero on a quest for immortality addresses the "pathos of inverted emphasis" that exists in the United States, where "the goal is not to grow old....We remain fixated to the unexorcised images of our infancy, and hence disinclined the necessary passages of our adulthood" (Campbell, 1973, p. 11).

In another way, encounter with Khidr is understood as encounter with projected numinous content of the unconscious, symbolized as a fish that disappears

at the place where Khidr is born. The fish is transformed into Khidr, and this is the indication that there is something in the unconscious that is ready to be transformed into consciousness. The fish, Jung explains, is a nourishing transformation-substance, of the nature of the wheat of Osiris or of the bread of Christ, and the corn deities of the Native Americans (1939/1944, p. 21). The fish symbol is also found in alchemy as the “round” something which is “indeed that great treasure which is hidden in the cave of the unconscious”(p. 22). The one to whom Khidr appears is not only altered by a shift in personal perspective but “will also affect the world in a different way” (p. 21).

Technology and the Collective

The appearance of a God-image in the form of an archetypal idea such as the concept of energy, mana, Logos, or a world mandala is a projection of an important unconscious psychic factor. Von Franz (1980) makes an interesting point about the current split between the hard sciences and the sciences of the psyche. In comparing the history of the development of certain concepts used in physics with the history of religious hermeneutics, she sees “an apparent difference in that the third stage of the withdrawal of projections--the stage of moral evaluation--seems to be missing in the natural sciences” (p. 71).

“Rapid technological and social changes have led to profound changes in reality perception” writes Winnicottian Gilbert Rose (1995, p. 347). He states that “id, ego, and superego functions are shifting in response to change in our world of reality, in order to support the feeling of being real, intact, and authentic in a world perceived as impersonal, destructive and degrading” (pp. 347-348). What is occurring with the destruction of our natural resources and loss of Eros as meaningful

connection with other living and organic, mineral and ethereal beings, is evidence of one-sidedness and overvaluation of the rational, logical, thinking function of the psyche.

Romanyshyn (1989) offers a modern critique of dualistic, subject-object, linear thinking and the discovery of the vanishing point in terms of their effect on the soul. Without the boundary of the technologically imposed frame on our perceptions, the movement between the conscious and the unconscious, the imaginal and the concrete, it is possible that the imaginal would be appreciated for its reality rather than its liminality. Too much subjective, ego-bound consciousness creates discomfort and pathology when the collective unconscious, the “dreaming underworld,” calls for balance. Our technological perspective has overshadowed the spiritual and aesthetic so that we experience anxiety near the border where Khidr posits nonlinear knowing.

The overvaluation of technology and intellect and repression of feelings and intuition take a toll on the collective psyche. Consider the fairytale of the woodcutter’s son. The woodcutter’s son releases the spirit Mercurius from a bottle and discovers the spirit’s power and lack of concern for good and evil. The boy is able to entice Mercurius back into the bottle and exact a reward of a bit of magic cloth that changes his axe, made of base metal, into silver. There is an alchemical transformation of the boy, too, for he has a new consciousness and goes onto become a healer of men (Paulsen, 1966, pp. 107-122).

Jung points out that “just as Mercurius eluded the boy, and made his escape, so powerful forces today have been unleashed in the world through our intellectual achievements” (Paulsen, 1966, p. 117). It may be just as easily said of the Khidr myth as of the fairy tale of the woodcutter’s son that here is a message of timely and vital import to the individual and the collective psyche.

Mercurius, whether as greybeard or youth, as the senex or the puer of the alchemists, seeks the wholeness that appears in individuation. But wholeness starts from an act of consciousness; it requires a willing ego, ready for complete and unconditional surrender. "The ego is softened and brought to that condition by the machinations of Mercurius, as the Trickster, as the Fool - or maybe even as Cupid" (Paulsen, 1966, p. 119). I would venture to add, even as Khidr. "In whatever form he takes, Mercurius pricks out ego's self-centered isolation, and brings us into confrontation with the wider world in which our fellow men exist, a world in which relatedness is required of us" (p. 119).

The Khidr mythologem, as it continues into the third part of Sura 18, tells us of the hero, now known as Dhu'lQarnayn, helping people with his wisdom. The hero, Dhu'lQarnayn (who may be also Moses as the "Two Horned," or Alexander the Great), is portrayed as a leader helping his people. "We made him strong in the land and gave him unto every thing a road" (Sura 18:85). He meted out justice according to divine guidance and built a wall to protect a defenseless folk from "God and Magog who are spoiling the land" (18:95).

The appearance of Khidr in the Qur'an addresses the overvaluation of the thinking function, of logic in the old law represented by Moses. The function of the symbol, of an archetypal content, is to unite the pairs of opposites, to balance and compensate for a position of one-sidedness. The image of the Green Man has come to the attention of many Westerners, such as Robert Romanyshyn (1989), who are concerned about the soulless-ness of the modern technological world.

The European Green Man as a vegetative nature spirit is an opposite of man-made machines. Jung's attempt to examine the archetypal world and describe it gain for all of us "an insight into the psyche of the archaic man who still lives within

us" (Jacobi, 1959, p. 32). This inner, archaic "two million year old man" as in mythical times, "is present only in germ, without fixed boundaries," and "is still wholly interwoven with the world and nature" (p. 32). Khidr, also, is an opposite to rational thinking and technology and his myth offers access on an intuitive level to knowledge and experience of wholeness and integration.

An ancient mythologem from the Islamic world, with a language-bound differing sense of time and space, may be too awkward for the general Western reader to integrate. However, the phenomena of the individual encounters we have discussed indicate that Khidr is active in the world today. Perhaps the Khidr myth is emerging as part of a new myth providing a "cultural-psychological dream" that will bring the breakdown of the modern "linear, fixed perspective, and the breakdown of all that goes with it including literal, univocal, singular modes of perceiving and thinking" (Romanyshyn, 1989, p. 225). The function of Khidr in the mythic encounter with Moses is exactly that, to break down old ways of being and knowing.

If, taking the standpoint of analytical psychology, we speak of Khidr as an archetype, he will seem to lose his reality and become a figment of the imagination, if not the intellect. And if we speak of him as a real person, we shall no longer be able to characterize the difference in structure between Khidr's relationship with his disciple and the relationship that any other shaikh on this earth can have with his. (Corbin, 1969, p. 59)

The transformative encounter with Khidr is not for one man alone. If it were, it never would have found its way into an archetypal narrative that carries spiritual meaning for so many souls for so many centuries. The Boon or Reward seems to have been granted, for the hero is wise and has brought back the Elixir. It is significant for the theme of rebirth and the goal of finding the water of immortal life, that the last sequence provides revelation on the Last Days. It may be recalled that Khidr, like Elijah and St. George, will be present at the End Times.

The End Times

A temporary religious psychosis, overtaking otherwise normal visitors of all faiths, has been described by Dr. Yair Bar-El, a psychiatrist in that country recently. This phenomenon, a type of fugue or temporary memory loss with delusions, has become known as "the Jerusalem syndrome" ("Easter Millennial Trek," 1999). It often does not have more than 2 weeks duration, and there is no indication whom may be prone to such a break. The symptoms involve loss of sense of previous identity and extreme religious zeal, bizarre behavior such as wearing sheets and preaching in the streets or severe penitential behavior such as crawling on the knees for great distances.

In Damascus Gate (Stone, 1998), a novel in which political groups use victims of this syndrome, millennium fears and symptoms of psychosis are described as moving the entire city of Jerusalem into a liminal state. The people involved take the Uroboros as their religious symbol, ... the symbol of the beginning and the end which the Talsesin poem describes, and which fits the alchemical Mercurius and Khidr's immortal presence until the end times.

For Further Inquiry.

It becomes evident that the psychological interpretation of an archetypal myth opens the door to a world without boundaries. Considerable information about the Khidr figure and the archetypal myth in which he appears is offered here. For future inquiry into this topic, there are questions to be asked about the autonomy of the archetype. Is Khidr encountered only when the archetype is constellated in the unconscious by a need for compensation in the ego consciousness? Can an arbitrary event create the liminal state of a Khidr encounter?

This research provides an extensive overview and a rather comprehensive study of Khidr references in literature, but is limited to English, French, and German. The reader of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish would be able to expand and deepen our understanding of Khidr. In addition, a phenomenological study of subjects who report having a consciousness altering encounter of the Khidr myth theme would be of great interest and help to expand our understanding of this numinous experience.

The encounter with Khidr is sometimes imaginal, but just as often with a flesh-and-blood human being. The experience is felt as real and may indeed be a concrete occurrence. The religious function of the psyche seems to allow a connection to be perceived in the encounter between the subtle body of the imaginal spirit, the subjective ego, and the incarnate figure, the object, the "Other," encountered. Perhaps Khidr acts autonomously as a real object, requesting validation from the collective unconscious. The relationship is one of mutuality, just as the relationship between parts of the Psyche and therapist and client.

The hope of this work is to introduce and differentiate Khidr to allow his presence as imaginal, archetypal, real, or unreal to pervade our thinking enough so that the doors to his wisdom can flow in and show a new way of knowing, for that is his function. An either or answer, an answer to the question of whether he is an archetype or he is not an archetype is "not adequate to the phenomenon of Khidr's person" (Corbin, 1955 & 1956/ 1969, p. 59).

It is hoped that Khidr may be better understood and through this work. It has been a circuitous path to walk in trying to define the indefinable and know the unknowable, as is the nature of an archetypal figure. In the confusion a liminal, confused sense may have enveloped the reader's otherwise keen mind. This phenomenon indicates either obscurity on the part of the writer, or that the archetype

may indeed be present. If this effort has provoked and stirred the psyche to new interest and awareness of Khidr, and a desire to follow him, may Allah be with the reader.

Salam 'alyakum.

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